NEWS / A7

SC clears Pepsi of any liability in promotional flap 14 years ago

BUSINESS / B3

After Pancake House, cash-flushed Lorenzos to feast on Goldilocks

WORLD / A22

Japan to withdraw its 550 troops from Iraq by July

SPORTS / A25

Spain sails into World Cup second round

NEWS / A18

RP wins 3 awards in 53rd Cannes int'l advertising festival

Marines' No. 3 resigns, cites political pressure

By Dona Pazzibugan

THE THIRD HIGHEST OFFICIAL OF THE 8,000-strong Marine Corps has resigned his post, expressing disgust over alleged politicking in the military service.

Col. Orlando de Leon of Philippine Military Academy Class '82 quit as chief of staff of the Marine Corps last week.

MARINES'/A15

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Wednesday, June 21, 2006 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 193 P18 website: www.inq7.net

New mountain to scale for Everest climbers

By Blanche S. Rivera

FROM EVEREST TO BIAK-na-Bato.

Leo Oracion and Erwin Emata, the first Filipinos to reach the world's highest peak, have come a long way to save the national park in

NEW MOUNTAIN/ A6

BAKA MA-UNAHAN KAYO NI ABENOJAR!

Gov't troops going full blast vs NPAs

Another militant killed in Negros Or.

By Carla Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau
Edwin O. Fernandez
PDI Mindanao Bureau
and Luige A. del Puerto

GUNMEN WEARING HOODS OVER their heads yesterday shot dead a human rights worker in Negros Oriental, a day after motorcycle-riding assassins gunned down two broadcast journalists in Kidapawan City in Mindanao.

The latest spate of killings brought to at least 232 the number of militants killed since President Macapagal-Arroyo took office in 2001, and to 44 the number of media people murdered during that period.

The attacks on political activists and journalists have continued despite pledges from the national police that they would take steps to stop them.

Eladio Dasi-an, 37, a volunteer for the Karapatan human rights group, was riding on a motorcycle when a jeep carrying four men bumped into him in Guihulngan town, according to his colleagues.

The four men then got out and shot him.

Prior to his murder, Dasi-an had received death threats from an alleged military intelligence man, Karapatan Negros secretary general Fred Cana claimed in a talk with the INQUIRER.

"This is the result of the P1 billion (anti-insurgency fund) released by GMA," said Roberto de Castro, secretary general of the militant party-list group Bayan

ANOTHER/A15

Call centers to earn $7.3B by year 2010

By Ronnel W. Domingo

ANNUAL FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNings from Philippine call centers are expected to nearly triple within the next five years as the industry expands and becomes more efficient in the daytime use of its work stations, an industry leader said yesterday.

Rainerio Borja, a director of the Contact Center Association of the Philippines, said annual earnings of local call centers would grow to $7.3 billion by 2010, up nearly 300 percent from projected earnings of $2.6 billion this year.

Speaking at the opening of the two-day Call Center Conference and Expo 2006 being held at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel in Mandaluyong City, Borja said the number of people employed by the industry would likewise increase 182 percent to 506,500 call center agents compared to only 179,000 this year.

The number of work stations or agents' seats are expected to expand to 300,000 in 2010 from 112,000 at present, according to Borja, who is also the president of People Support, a call center firm.

Citing figures from the industry association and the government, Borja told the annual industry conference that call

CALL CENTERS/ A6

Nationwide quake drill: Duck, cover, hold

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MEDICATION CARD
SCRATCH PAPER
STAPLE WIRE
STAPLER
PF FORM
PUNCHER
RX PAD
SCHEDULE OF OPERATION
TPN REQUEST FORM
CUSTOMER SURVEY FORM

HOW TO KEEP BABIES SAFE: The nationwide earthquake drill on Tuesday focused on schoolchildren in 152 pilot elementary and high schools. Nurses at the Manila Doctors Hospital on UN Avenue in Ermita, Manila, also participated cradling infants confined at the neo-intensive care unit under a table to keep them safe from falling objects. RAFFY LERMA

YESTERDAY'S NATIONWIDE EARTHquake drill was marked by bells and sirens sounding, and students and teachers heeding the operative words "duck, cover and hold."

The exercise went smoothly and uneventfully in certain schools all over the country. But some schools did not even know, or learned too late, that such a drill had been ordered.

At the 8,000-square-meter Sta. Elena High School in Marikina City, one of the 152 pilot schools chosen from among 42,000 public elementary and high schools nationwide for the drill, the script called for three students to be knocked unconscious and 17 wounded—plus a fire breaking out in the cafeteria.

The drill was attended by President Macapagal-Arroyo, Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology

NATIONWIDE/ A8

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY, this is the way to go, teacher Sandra Gayao instructs her Grade I pupils at the Doña Josefa Elementary School in Baguio City. Quake preparedness drills were conducted citywide. TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

No lessons learned from 7.8 Baguio earthquake

By PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—THE NATIONwide earthquake drill on Tuesday raised old ghosts about Baguio's vulnerability to another powerful tremor, according to local engineers, teachers and rescue workers.

The city was nearly wiped out by the intensity-7.8 earthquake that rocked Luzon in 1990. Media images of the shattered towers of the Hyatt Terraces Baguio provided the country with lasting portraits of the devastation that killed about 2,000 residents, students and tourists.

But 16 years after the quake, firefighters who joined the drill said they were surprised to still find meter-wide corridors at a local elementary school and high school, when almost all of the urban plans drawn up after the 1990 quake urged building reforms for most of these institutions.

The flow of exiting students was obstructed by classroom doors that swing outward, said

NO LESSONS/ A8

DND to pull out VIPs' bodyguards for combat

By Dona Pazzibugan, Christian V. Esguerra and Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

MOVING FULL BLAST against communist rebels, defense officials yesterday announced they would pull out soldiers doubling as bodyguards of politicians and VIPs and send them into battle, as Church leaders appealed to Malacañang to give peace a chance.

On top of the 1,500 soldiers already recalled from Mindanao, Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz said the military would throw 3,000 more fresh troops into the war with New People's Army rebels in Luzon.

"We are recalling soldiers assigned with other departments and from the security detail of civilians. We will also recall 453 troops detailed with the Philippine Sports Commission after the Doha (Asian) Games (in December). This is approximately 3,000 troops," he said.

One of the military's top counterinsurgency fighters, Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, said he planned to deploy soldiers in 118 towns and 12 cities of Central Luzon to help President Macapagal-Arroyo in her goal of defeating the insurgency within her term, or at least wipe the insurgents out in "critical" areas in Luzon within two years.

Leaders of the country's Roman Catholic Church voiced their concern and called on the Arroyo administration to go back to the negotiating table.

"It would better if the government would just continue with the peace talks. I'm wondering why they abandoned the peace talks," said Bishop Deogracias Iniguez, head of the CBCP Commission on Public Affairs.

Iniguez said the government would not be able to wipe out the 37-year-old insurgency "even if you kill all NPA rebels" and warned: "It's like a hydra—you cut off one head and there are still many others to contend with," Iniguez said.

Msgr. Pedro Quitorio, spokesperson of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, said the Arroyo administration should learn from history that the insurgency cannot be defeated by military force.

"Past presidents starting from Cory (Aquino) didn't solve the insurgency. Violence against violence is not the solution," Quitorio said.

The last informal talks between the administration and the communists were held in August last year.

Referring to the 1,500 battle-tested troops that have arrived at Camp Nakar in Lucena City from Mindanao, Cruz told reporters: "For now, it's just these three battalions but we are forming additional battalions."

Cruz had previously announced plans to recall military troops assigned as security details of government officials and

GOV'T / A15

GI pal who invited Nicole to Subic 'feels guilty'

By Volt Contreras

WELL AHEAD OF THE ACTUAL VERdict, someone already pleaded "guilty" in the Subic rape trial yesterday—and he was an American.

No, he was not one of the four accused US Marines. It was US Navy serviceman Christopher Mills, who described himself as a friend of the Filipino complainant "Nicole."

Mills had invited Nicole and her sister to join him on a vacation at the Subic Freeport where the alleged crime took place.

"I felt guilty... sorrow... because they were friends of mine," Mills, a 27-year-old petty officer on the US Navy ship Stockham, told the Makati City court as the 14th witness for the prosecution.

"I wouldn't want anything bad to happen to them. They wouldn't have been there if I hadn't invited them," Mills, who had flown in from the United States, said during direct examination by state prosecutor Elizabeth Berdal.

Mills said he befriended Nicole and her family in Zamboanga City in July 2005. He recalled frequenting the café run by the victim's family inside a Philippine military base in Zamboanga City whenever the USS Stockham docked to get supplies.

His appearance marked another emotional episode for Nicole. Before the 1 p.m.

GI PALS/ A6

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Luzon, the whole of Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of Luzon will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

COMPILED BY KATE V. PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/06/20/06 SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Solons say 'will' not P1B needed to wipe out graft

By TJ Burgonio and Nelson F. Flores

OPPOSITION SENATORS YESterday said what President Macapagal-Arroyo needed to wipe out corruption in government was political will, not money to the tune of P1 billion.

Senate President Franklin Drilon, Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel and Sen. Panfilo Lacson said all the President has to do is jail the grafters close to her.

This means the relatives and government officials they allege to be responsible for the corruption in government.

"Obviously she cannot muster that political will because the coterie of people around her could be implicated and could implicate her in her corrupt practices that characterize her administration," said Pimentel.

"All the President has to do is to really send a strong message by going after people very close to her ... Maybe a relative, maybe a husband, maybe a brother-in-law," Lacson told ANC television.

The P1 billion is the government counterpart fund to the $21 million grant given by the United States under the Millennium Challenge Account.

The Philippines qualified for a two-year grant under the MCA, a special $1.5-billion aid fund initiated by President Bush to reward poor countries that govern justly, invest in their people and encourage economic freedom.

The Philippines proposed to use the money for a comprehensive anticorruption program.

Drilon said it was right for government to allocate funds for the fight against corruption but "more important is the political will to jail the grafters."

Administration Sen. Ralph Recto welcomed the fresh funding for the anticorruption campaign saying "putting resources in government agencies is a good first step."

Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez yesterday assured the public that her office would be "crystal clear" in the disbursement of the $21 million US grant and the P1 billion counterpart fund.

"We will really be transparent. America has entrusted this money to us and they will be watching us," Gutierrez said in a mixture of English and Filipino.

She said there will be transparency at every level, from procedures, accounting and utilization, to ensure that every cent is 'spent on programs and projects to eliminate corruption.

Of the $21 million MCA grant, $6.5 million will go the Office of the Ombudsman for training and establishing information management and surveillance capability.

Gutierrez said the money would be used to further train prosecutors in the investigation and handling of cases.

PNP purchase flawed, invites probe – Nene

By TJ Burgonio and Luige A. del Puerto

THE ACQUISITION BY THE PHILIPPINE NATIONal Police of some P322 million worth of new equipment without a public bidding was flawed from the start and could be the subject of an inquiry, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr. said yesterday.

"Police authorities are erroneously advancing assumptions to justify the no-bid acquisition of the police equipment. The purchase may be justified only if there is a bidding," Pimentel said in a statement.

"Without it, the acquisition is wrongful from the start."

The PNP is purchasing patrol cars, handguns and motorcycles in time for the 12th Asean summit in Manila this December.

The officials, however, dispensed with a public bidding and resorted to "negotiated procurement" and "direct contracting" with selected suppliers for lack of time. They are now awaiting delivery of the vehicles and handguns.

Pimentel chided the police officials for justifying their actions by claiming it saved the government millions of pesos, and did not rule out that the Senate would open an inquiry into the matter.

"It is like building a house without a solid foundation. It may be cheaper but actually faulty and in the long run, establish a bad precedent where bureaucrats will justify no-bid purchases on the ground that in their self-serving appraisal, it is cheaper to do so," he said.

"Otherwise, why did Congress enact the rules on bidding in the acquisition of items needed by the government if these could be ignored on the say-so of the bureaucrats concerned?"

The officials said that the PNP saved P56 million from the purchases even as Local Government Secretary Ronaldo Puno said that the organization skirted a public bidding to maintain the standardization of vehicles and equipment.

Deputy Director Avelino Razon, chair of the bids and awards committee, said that acquiring the vehicles through bidding was even disadvantageous to the government. He said that a company could offer a cheaper price for each car, but these could end up in the junk yard after a year for lack of spare parts.

Pimentel wondered why the police officials had to do away with bidding, a standard government procurement procedure.

"Why won't they comply with the requirements of the bidding? Is it because somebody is making a killing on it? These are the things that should be clarified by the PNP authorities concerned to the public and before the proper Senate investigating committee," he said.

So far, no senator has filed a resolution seeking an inquiry into the matter.

The deal involves the purchase of 203 patrol cars worth P162 million; 12 600 cc motorcycles, P9.6 million and 5,000 firearms, P151 million.

Senior Supt. Samuel Pagdilao dismissed suggestions that the PNP was now abandoning public bidding for its purchases and said that the P322 million deal was above board.

"There have been safeguards that there is no corruption involved in this transaction," he said. "It was ensured that government benefited by this action of the PNP," said the PNP spokesperson.

In a press briefing, the PNP also said that the security of the Asean summit in December hinges on the timely delivery of the equipment.

The police can secure the summit with existing equipment, but that would entail pulling out resources in one area and bringing them to summit sites, particularly in Cebu province, where the main Asean meeting shall be held.

'More moderate' Senate seen under Villar

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

MOST SENATORS ARE EXPECTING a "more moderate Senate" under the leadership of Sen. Manuel Villar, according to administration Sen. Ralph Recto.

Recto said the decision of at least 14 senators to support the election of Villar as new Senate President reflected their preference for a change in how the Senate handles congressional investigations and deals with the executive branch.

"It's a reflection of the entire Senate today. The people who signed the resolution believe that the new (Senate President) can provide better leadership at this time," Recto said in a phone interview.

He said the majority of the senators shared the people's sentiments.

They don't like conflict, they don't want an unconstitutional means of removing the President, they only favor impeachment, he said.

Recto said the antagonism between the President and the Senate hampered the upper chamber in its main task of legislating laws.

"We must have a working relationship with the executive. In doing our work, we need information from Malacañang that will help us come up with sound legislation," he said.

Recto said the Senate under the leadership of outgoing Senate President Franklin Drilon was "clearly opposition."

He said Villar was "a little more moderate" than Drilon who led the Liberal Party in withdrawing support from President Macapagal-Arroyo in July 2005 at the height of the controversy over the alleged rigging of the vote in 2004.

Recto, who belongs to the Wednesday Group of senators that includes Villar and Senators Joker Arroyo and Francis Pangilinan, said he did not expect any more calls for the President's resignation emanating from the Senate.

But he clarified that "more moderate" should not be seen as a softening of the Senate's tradition of independence from Malacañang.

The senators would certainly not soften their opposition to the Charter change advocated by Malacañang, the House and Ms Arroyo's allies in the local governments and the private sector.

Under Villar's leadership, Recto said the Senate would not stop conducting investigations of various fund irregularities.

2 Pinoys seized in Nigeria

NIGERIA—TWO FILipino oil workers were kidnapped near the southeastern city of Port Harcourt on Tuesday, the local police chief said.

It was the latest in a string of kidnappings and assaults on foreign workers in the Niger Delta, where militants fighting for control of the region's resources have warned oil workers to leave.

It was not immediately clear who was behind the abduction.

"Two Filipinos were kidnapped. We are looking into the circumstances," Rivers State Police Commissioner Samuel Agbetuyi told Reuters by telephone. The Filipinos were not identified.

The Niger Delta produces all of Nigeria's 2.4 million barrels of oil daily, but most oil producing communities have seen little benefit from decades of oil production, which has sparked an increasingly violent backlash against the industry.

Attacks and abductions by the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (Mend) have forced oil companies to cut back by about 500,000 barrels a day since February. *Reuters*

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Int'l group raps killing of lawyers

ANOTHER INTERNATIONAL FACT-finding mission into the unsolved killings here of activists and journalists has confirmed the findings of previous missions that there was "a pattern of impunity" in the cases.

Jan Bless, a district court judge in Haarlem, the Netherlands, told a news conference the group was persuaded that this was so because of the growing number of lawyers and judges killed.

"Every government must protect its lawyers and judges. The government must condemn the attacks," said Bless, the spokesperson of the mission composed of lawyers and judges.

He noted how the government had labeled lawyers defending political dissenters in court as "enemies of the state."

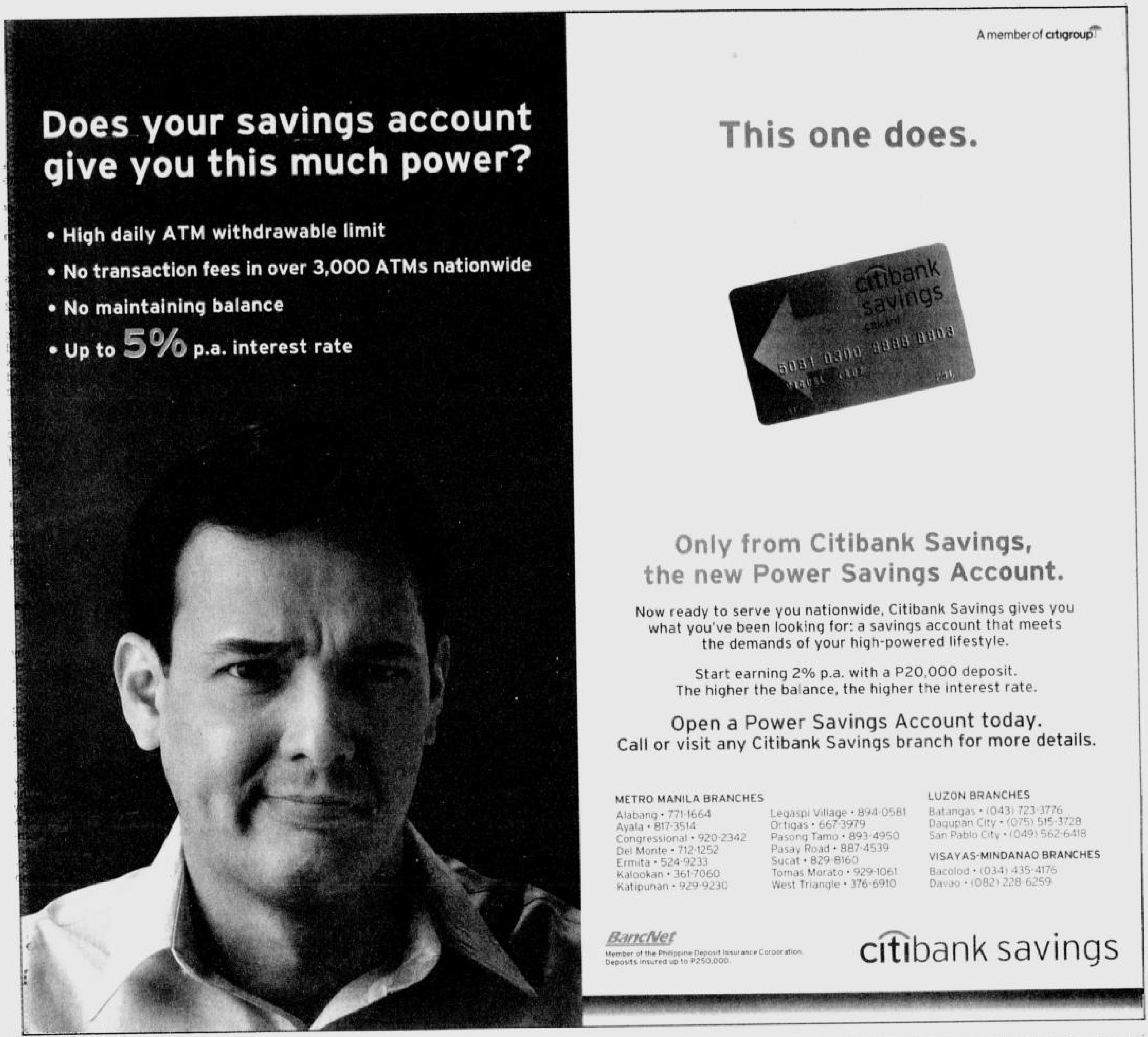
"Many lawyers were threatened and killed since the beginning of last year. A good number of them were involved in human rights-related cases," said Bless.

The Counsels for the Defense of Liberties, which hosted the mission, said at least 13 lawyers and 10 judges have been killed during the Arroyo administration.

"These are disgusting types of killings. These are cowardly killings. Witnesses are afraid to testify for fear of their lives. No killer has been convicted," said Bless.

The mission's interviews with government authorities revealed "no satisfactory information regarding the slow handling of the cases," he said.

He said the mission members did have one recommendation: "Stop the killings!" *Norman Bordadora*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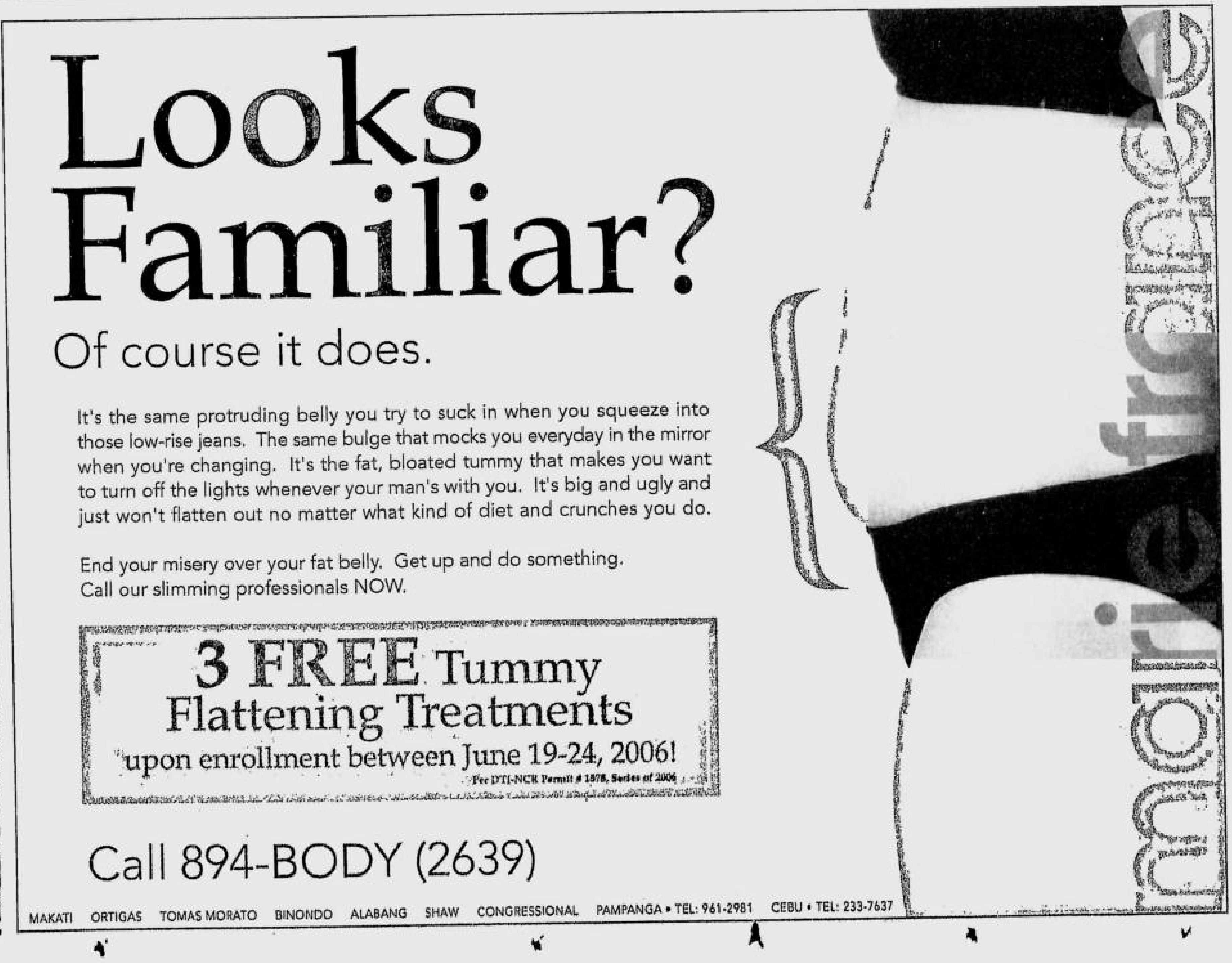
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DA celebrates 108th year anniversary

Palace honors 2006 Gawad Saka achievers

After its creation through a Presidential Proclamation in 1898, the Department of Agriculture (DA) will be celebrating its 108th year of serving the farmers and fisherfolk on June 23, 2006. On its founding anniversary, the Department reflects on its achievements and contributions in shaping the country's vision of growth and progress and in uplifting the farmers' and fisherfolk's welfare.

Agriculture Secretary Domingo F. Panganiban reported that the agriculture sector posted a 3.94 percent growth during the first quarter of 2006 - - - an achievement attributed to the farmers and fisherfolk — the people who provide for the basic needs of the entire populace.

To highlight the anniversary celebration, the DA will be giving awards to the 2006 Gawad Saka Outstanding Achievers in Agriculture on June 21, 2006 at the Rizal Hall, Malacañan Palace with Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo as the guest of honor and speaker.

The Gawad Saka Search has been an annual activity of the Department since 1970 giving due recognition to the farmers and fisherfolk for their invaluable contributions to agriculture and the impact of these contributions to nation-building.

The Department hopes that the honor it bestows on them shall inspire the honorees into even greater heights in enriching agricultural development in this country, as the same successes should encourage others walk the same path they are treading.

For this year, 13 categories will be given awards, 11 of which are individual awards and the other two for outstanding organizations. The individual outstanding awardees will be given P30,000 cash award, presidential trophy, and presidential citation each and the outstanding organizations will each be awarded P150,000 worth of project grant from the National Agricultural and Fishery Council, an attached agency of the DA. On the other hand, those individual achievers with special citation will be awarded P15,000 cash award and presidential citation each.

Outstanding Rice Farmer awardee Nemecio Cristobal of Villa Magat, San Mateo, Isabela will lead the awardees for this year. Cristobal is being honored for his invaluable contribution in the agriculture sector and for realizing more than 300 percent ROI for two consecutive cropping seasons last year for both inbred and hybrid rice varieties.

Secretary's Report

PALAY AND CORN PRODUCTION HIGHLIGHTS

As of May 15, 2006, palay output for the 2nd quarter has reached 2.91 metric tons—a slight 0.2% higher than the April Round forecast and 9.8% above last year's level of 2.65 million tons.

Harvest area has also exceeded the April Round forecast of 748 thousand hectares by a nominal 0.3% and last year's record of 692 thousand hectares by 8.4%. Of the expected harvest area of 751 thousand hectares, 73% was already harvested.

For this reason, April-June plantings are expected to reach 879 thousand hectares, 4.2% higher than last year's projection for the same period. To date, at least 253 thousand hectares have been planted.

Corn output for the 2nd quarter as of May 15, 2006 has reached 1.06 million tons, 47.9% higher than last year's level of 720 thousand tons.

Corn harvest area has also surpassed last year's 340 thousand hectares by 30%. From the 443 thousand hectares, 54% was already harvested.

RICE AND CORN STOCK INVENTORY

Total rice stock as of May 1, 2006 was estimated at 2.42 million metric tons (mt), around 231 thousand mt (21.2%) higher than last year's stock for the same period. It was also higher by 10.5 percent than the preceding month's level of 2.19 million metric tons.

Compared to last year, stock in the households, commercial warehouses and NFA depositories went up by 15.6, 5.2, and 47.0 percent, respectively. Imported rice comprised 94.0 percent of NFA stock. This month's imported rice in NFA was 58.0 percent higher than last year's level.

The current total corn stock amounted to 182 thousand metric tons, lower than the preceding month and last year's levels by 30.9 and 19.0 percent, respectively.

Stock drawdown was observed in commercial warehouses at 45.4 percent last year and 48.6 percent last month. Household stock went down by 20.3 percent compared to last month's level but 14.8 percent higher than last year's record.

Around 67 percent of the current corn stocks is with the households and 33 percent is with the commercial warehouses.

MESSAGES

Malacañan Palace
Manila

Malugod akong bumabati sa lahat ng mga katangi-tanging *agricultural achievers* ng GAWAD SAKA 2006.

Muli, pinatunayan ninyo ang inyong walang sawang pagsisikap at pagpupunyagi sa larangan ng agrikultura upang maitaas ang antas di lamang ng inyong buhay kundi maging ng inyong mga kanayon at kababayan.

Kalakip ng aking pagbati ay ang aking pasasalamat sa inyo na patuloy na nagpapakapagod sa matinding init bilang pagtugon sa malawakang panawagan na kamtin ang kasapatan sa pagkain. Dahil sa tulong ninyo, patuloy na nahahainan ang hapag-kainan ng bawat Pilipino ng sapat, masustansya, at ligtas na pagkain araw-araw.

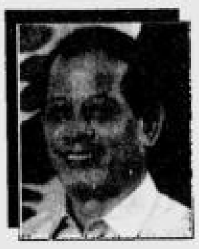
Dahil sa ating pagtutulungan, umabot sa 3.94 porsyento ang itinaas ng sektor ng agrikultura sa unang tatlong buwan ng taong ito. Ito ay nakatulong ng malaki sa muling pagsigla ng ating ekonomiya. Bukod dito, muli ninyong napatunayan na sa pamamagitan ng inyong mga pambihirang kakayahan, kaya ninyong sumabay sa mga modernisasyong kinakaharap ng buong mundo partikular na sa sektor na inyong kinabibilangan. At dahil dito, lubos naming kayong ipinagkakapuri.

Muli, ang aking pagbati sa inyong mga makabagong bayani.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

Gloria Arroyo
Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

KAGAWARAN NG PAGSASAKA



Mainit na pagbati sa lahat ng mga magsasaka, mangingisda, prosesor, entreprenor, siyentista, mga samahan at institusyon na naging bahagi ng pambansang paligsahan sa larangan ng sakahan at pangisdaan nitong taon o *Gawad Saka 2006.*

Bilang isa sa mga nagsimula ng tradisyong ito — na tinaguriang "Mga Katangi-tanging Magsasaka ng Taon" o *"Outstanding Farmers of the Year"* noong 1970 — ako at ang aking mga kasama ay para na ring pinararangalan taun-taon habang ang Gawad Saka ay patuloy na kumikilala sa tagumpay ng ating mga magsasaka, mangingisda, entreprenor at mga institusyon sa kanayunan.

Lalong tumitingkad ang kahalagahan ng kontribusyon ng ating *"2006 Gawad Saka Awardees,"* dahil ang sektor ng sakahan at pangisdaan ay nakapagtala ng magandang ani nitong unang semestre. Nawa ang tagumpay na ito'y magpatuloy hanggang sa pagtatapos ng taon, at sa susunod pang mga taon.

Ang kani-kanilang indibidwal at kolektibong tagumpay — dahil sa walang-humpay na pagsisikap, tiyaga at pagkamapanlikha — ay nag-ambag din sa panibagong sigla at muling pag-angat ng sektor ng agrikultura at ng pambansang ekonomiya.

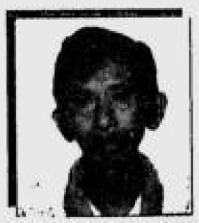
Nananalig kami sa Kagawaran ng Pagsasaka na ang *2006 Gawad Saka Awardees,* kasama ang iba pang nanalo mula noong 1970, ay patuloy na magsisilbing inspirasyon ng kapwa nilang magsasaka, mangingisda at entreprenor sa kanayunan — nang sa ganun ay sama-sama nilang maitaguyod ang sektor ng sakahan at pangisdaan sa tugatog ng kasaganaan.

Kaya nga kasabay ng aking pagbati ay ang pagbibitaw ng bagong hamon para sa kanilang lahat: Patuloy at kapit-bisig nating isulong ang modernisasyon ng ating mga sakahan at pangisdaan tungo sa pantay-pantay at tuluy-tuloy na pag-unlad at kapayapaan ng sambayanang Pilipino.

Mabuhay ang Gawad Saka 2006!

Domingo F. Panganiban
Kalihim

GAWAD SAKA 2006 AWARDEES



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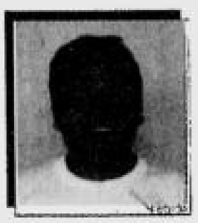
Outstanding Rice Farmer
San Mateo, Isabela

EDGAR DE LUNA
Outstanding Corn Farmer
Cauayan City, Isabela



ROGER S. CAMARINTA
Outstanding
Sugarcane Farmer
Lantapan, Bukidnon

ERIBERTO DE OCAMPO
Outstanding HVCC Farmer
Naguilian, Isabela

RESURRECION U. DE PANO
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Outstanding Fisherfolk
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MS. LOURDES P. DE LA PEÑA
Outstanding Fisherfolk
(Fish Capture)
Bantayan, Cebu

RYAN L. MONTAÑEZ
Outstanding Young Farmer
Lower Pulacan, Labangan
Zamboanga del Sur

MR. PEPITO DEGAMO
Outstanding Small Farmers/
Fisherfolk Organization
Midsalip Farmers MPC
Poblacion B, Midsalip,
Zamboanga del Sur

DR. RENE RAFAEL C. ESPINO
Special Citation
Agricultural Scientist
College of Agriculture
University of the Philippines
Los Baños, Laguna

THOMAS C. REYES
Special Citation
Fisherfolk (Fish Culture)
Tayabas, Quezon

NOEL C. RAMIREZ
Special Citation
Fisherfolk (Fish Culture)
Pilar, Bataan

JOSE C. ALEGRIA
Special Citation
Fisherfolk (Fish Capture)
Lapu-lapu, Davao City

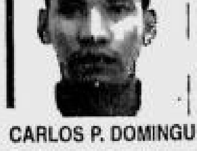
ROGELIO C. GUINTO
Special Citation
Fisherfolk (Fish Capture)
Limay, Bataan

CALBAYOG CITY CAFC
Outstanding City Agricultural and Fishery Council
Western Samar

MR. & MRS. BENJAMIN MAPUTI, SR. AND FAMILY
Outstanding Farm Family
Higaonon tribe, Malaybalay City, Bukidnon

MS. EDITHA E. TINGCANG
Special Citation
Small Animal Raiser
Buug, Zamboanga Sibugay

MICHAEL E. BINAURO
Special Citation
Young Farmer/Fisherfolk
Valencia City, Bukidnon



CARLOS P. DOMINGUEZ, JR.
Special Citation
Young Farmer/Fisherfolk
New Lucena, Iloilo

Live wire kills Cebu inmates

CEBU CITY—FIVE inmates were killed early yesterday after accidentally touching a power line while they were asleep in a crowded holding cell of the Bagong Buhay Rehabilitation Center at the city jail here.

Those who died were sleeping on the cement floor without shirts because of the oppressive heat in the cell, investigators said.

Six other prisoners who were asleep in hammocks or were sitting on the floor escaped electrocution.

Investigator JO1 Neil Rosaroso said a live electrical wire may have come loose from the ceiling's wiring system, coming to rest on the cell's steel bars, after one of the inmates pounded on the ceiling to hang a hammock hours before the accident which occurred at about 3 a.m.

Fatalities

He identified the fatalities as Roberto Caballes, 21; Nestor Luna, 52; Rustom Cuervo, 36, and Sesinando Abala, 33, all residents of Cebu City, and Mike Restauro, 19, of Talisay City.

Six inmates—Romulo Marinay, Rico Magdasal, Joel Suralta, Michael Bucales, Claro Pacadar Jr. and Manuel Elma—survived.

Marinay, who is an electrician, told investigators that he was seated on the floor fast asleep when he woke up with a start after he felt electric shocks running through his body.

He said he realized they were being electrocuted when he saw the live wire. He said he immediately stood up and pushed the wire away from the steel bars.

By then, however, the five victims were already unconscious.

Supt. Efren Nemeño, the jail warden, said they learned that Magdasal, one of the survivors, may have caused the accident because he was seen busily setting up his hammock the night before.

No outlets

According to Vice Mayor Michael L. Rama, prisoners at the jail intentionally expose the ceiling wiring to get secondary power lines for their electric fans because there are no electrical outlets inside the cells.

Rama, who chairs the city's Police Coordinating Advisory Council, said the jail did not deserve to be called a rehabilitation center considering the conditions under which the inmates live.

Rosaroso said four of the victims—Caballes, Restauro, Luna and Cuervo—were brought to the BBRC just last Monday for crimes ranging from attempted homicide, theft to drug violations.

Abala, who faced possession of illegal drugs charges, was also only recently transferred to the special security cell on his request as he planned to put up bail to gain his temporary liberty.

Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau

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Drive Inspired

MITSUBISHI MOTORS

GI pal who invited Nicole to Subic 'feels guilty'

From page A1

hearing could even start, she was in her seat, already in tears and being comforted by private counsel Evalyn Ursua and two female supporters.

Minutes before Judge Benjamin Pozon entered the courtroom, a distraught-looking Nicole was escorted out and into a nearby room. Ursua had also phoned two psychiatrists to come over to attend to her client.

Nicole returned to the courtroom three hours later. Asked what had upset her client, Ursua said it was "something Nicole heard" and did not elaborate. Later, the lawyer said Mills' attendance also had something to do with it.

When Mills finished his testimony and the proceedings had adjourned, he and Nicole, surrounded by their lawyers, embraced each other for close to five minutes.

Shall we dance?

The witness recalled what had transpired at Neptune Bar, the popular nightspot in Subic where the accused US Marines first met Nicole on the night of the alleged rape.

Mills and a US Navy serviceman he identified as Garcia, Nicole and her sister arrived at the club at around 10:30 p.m. on Nov. 1, 2005. They occupied a booth or an enclosed seating area with a horseshoe-shaped table near the dance floor.

That night, the sisters had "four to five drinks each" of alcoholic beverages. Mills said he recommended that the sisters try three concoctions—Long Island Iced Tea, Vodka Sprite and Bullfrog—because the women didn't know what to order.

Berdal made the witness identify the drinks, apparently in pursuit of the prosecution's contention that Nicole was too drunk to have given her consent to her alleged rapist, Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith.

Mills said the group had already done some dancing and were enjoying themselves when "somebody approached (Nicole)" and asked her for a dance.

'Take care of her'

Nicole was initially "scared" by the invitation and gave Mills a "look" as though to ask if it was OK for her to dance with the guy. Mills said she could go ahead. Mills also asked the man who asked Nicole to "just take care of her."

Shortly after this, Mills said he learned that Garcia, his liberty buddy, had stepped out of the bar and was arguing with a US shore patrol officer who had mistaken Garcia for a US Marine belonging to the USS Essex (the ship of the four accused) and wanted him to return to the vessel.

Mills said he went outside to help Garcia sort out his problem with the patrol officer. This was around 11:15 p.m. Mills said he was out of the club for 30 to 45 minutes.

When he went back inside, Nicole, according to her sister, was already "missing." They searched the karaoke rooms and the ladies' room, to no avail.

Searching for Nicole

A Neptune security guard later told them that he had seen a woman fitting Nicole's description "get into a van" that was parked outside.

At that point, Mills said, he surmised that Nicole may have gone with other US servicemen—such as the mobile security personnel—with whom she was also acquainted.

Before they parted ways at around 2 a.m. of Nov. 2, Mills and Nicole's sister continued the search in the casino of Legende Hotel, where Mills was staying.

At 2:15 a.m., Mills was already back in his hotel room when he got a call from Nicole's sister, who was staying at another hotel, the Grand Leisure. She said police had found Nicole who was in a hospital.

By 3 a.m., he finally saw Nicole in the hospital. She was "sitting in a chair, head down, in tears, frightened and confused."

What happened?

Mills asked her what happened and she said that "she didn't know, she couldn't remember. She's in a lot of pain in the vaginal area. She didn't know what to do." He would comfort her again later after the sisters had returned to their hotel rooms.

By 10 p.m., Mills was back on his ship, which was preparing to leave Subic for Singapore. He recalled getting a phone call from Nicole's sister telling him that "five guys had raped Nicole."

At this point, and without being asked, Mills said he "felt guilty" over what had happened to his friends.

During his direct and cross-examinations, Mills failed to provide a description of the man who, he said, had invited Nicole to dance at Neptune before she went "missing."

But a series of questions from Pozon helped the witness piece together a description: White, male, heavier built and taller than Mills who's 5' 5", with hair darker than Mills who's blond.

Finally, a yes

Asked if he could spot anyone in the courtroom who would "resemble" that person, Mills pointed to accused Lance Cpl. Keith Silkwood.

Mills was also asked how he became friends with Nicole. The witness said he had been visiting the family-run café in Zamboanga since 2005. He said he would hang out at the place, which was also frequented by other US servicemen, while waiting for his ship to load supplies.

A month before the incident, Mills and a friend Carlos Ocasio, another US Navy serviceman, invited Nicole and her sister to take a vacation at Subic where their ship would be docking next.

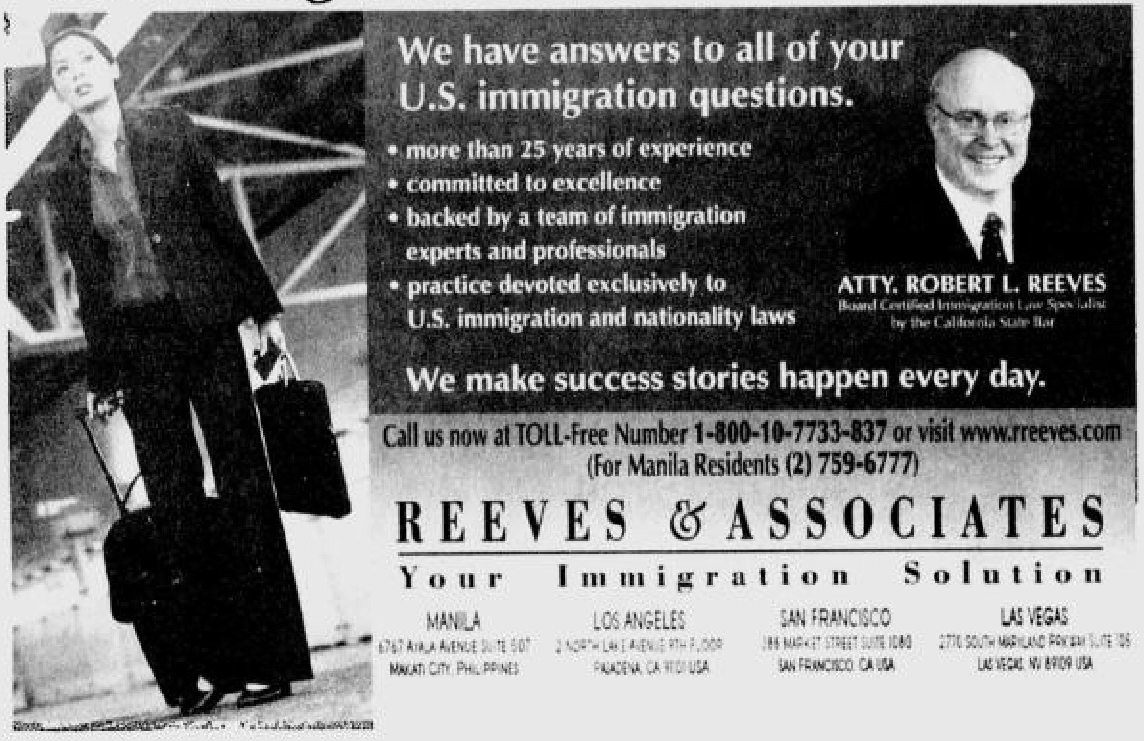
"You guys are always working. Don't you ever take a vacation?" Mills recalled teasing them.

The sisters initially declined, citing work. Later Mills and Ocasio offered to "pay for the (sisters') hotel" accommodations, if their mother would give her permission.

The sisters finally said yes one week before the USS Stockham arrived at Subic on Oct. 30. Mills said he booked a room for the sisters at the Grand Leisure while he stayed at Legende Hotel.

Before going to the Neptune, Mills, Nicole and her sister spent two hours at the Legende casino.

Mills said he taught the sisters how to play blackjack and roulette. He said he even gave the sisters P3,000 to P4,000 to gamble with.



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Call centers to earn $7.3B by year 2010

From page A1

centers and their employees would pay P8.6 billion ($162 million) in income taxes this year with more money spent on downstream industries, such as office rentals and equipment supplies.

Next gold mine

President Macapagal-Arroyo has singled out the call center industry as a key potential growth area as Western companies move more of their office functions abroad to take advantage of the huge pool of English-speaking workers in less developed countries, like the Philippines.

"Given these numbers, the value of this industry and its impact on the Philippine economy cannot be understated. We could just be scratching the surface of what could be the next Philippine gold mine," Borja said.

Call centers basically provide services involving agents making calls to sell products of mostly foreign clients or receiving calls to assist those who had bought their client's products.

Philippine call centers usually operate at night since their clients and their respective customers are located on the other side of the globe.

Inherent in this setup is the inefficiency of local call centers. "As contact centers grow in terms of the number of seats, the inefficiency of having these not used during day time will increase," Borja said.

To make their operations more efficient, call centers have started doing nonvoice work such as transcriptions, captioning, financial services, back office work and even medical transcription, he said.

Borja said call centers and business process outsourcing (BPO) firms would consolidate in the next few years as the two sectors mature.

Call centers and BPO firms are expanding not only in Metro Manila but also in the cities of Cebu, Iloilo, Bacolod and Dumaguete.

English proficiency

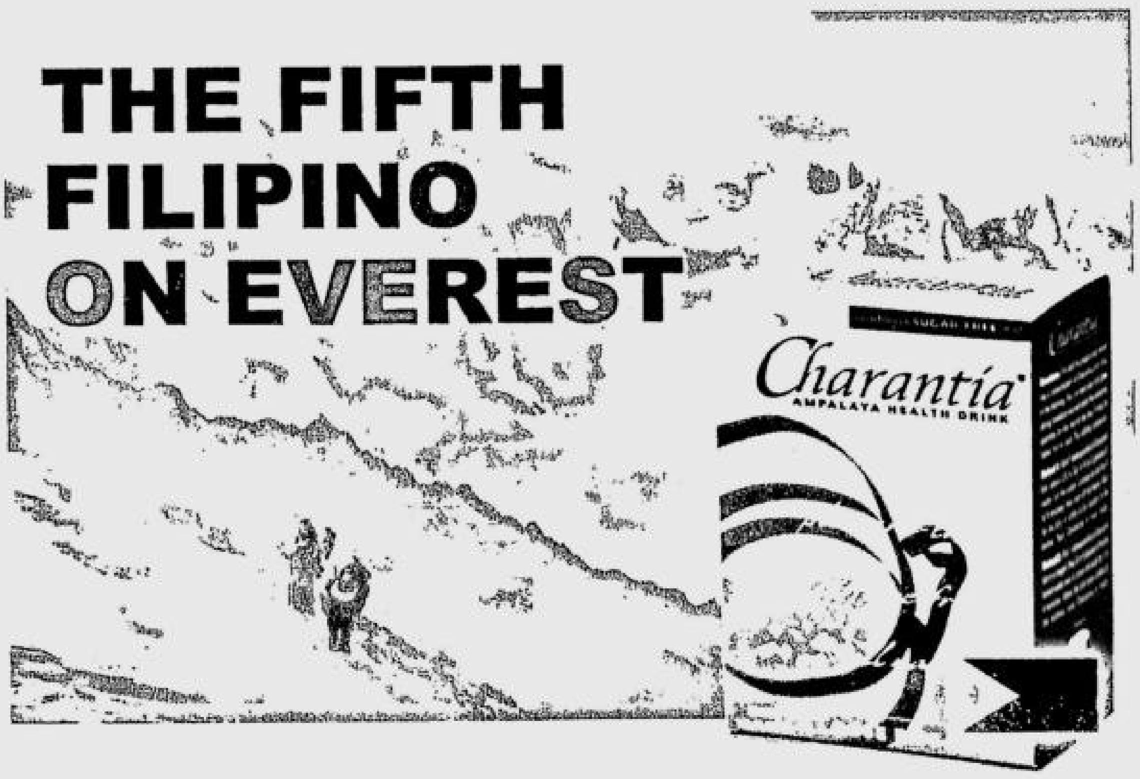
In order to expand, however, the industry should address the problem of a dwindling number of skilled workers, especially those proficient in English, Borja said.

He said local call centers should also learn from the experience of India, whose industry has been hobbled by high employee turnovers and rising wage costs.

Xavier Martin, a director of Alcatel Enterprise Solutions, said in a separate briefing that call center services would increasingly focus on the actual needs of customers, train them to solve their own problems, and provide analyses based on databases built from the interactions of agents and customers over time.

Alcatel yesterday launched its Omnitouch Contact Center Premium Edition that, according to the firm, was easy to use and efficient "just like what the iPod does for music enthusiasts."

With a report from AFP



THE FIFTH FILIPINO ON EVEREST

Charantia AMPALAYA HEALTH DRINK

On Saturday, May 20th, 2006, climber **Geri Winkler** stood at the peak of Mount Everest at 30,374 feet. Reaching into his pack, he produced a stainless steel flask and poured himself a steaming cup of tea.

Charantia Ampalaya Tea. Proudly Filipino.

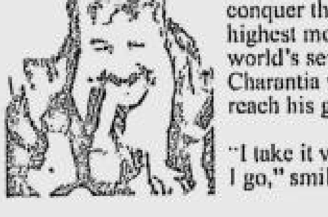
A writer, a teacher and an outdoor sportsman, Geri Winkler is also a Type-1 Diabetic.

***

Over the past four years, Geri has climbed four of the highest mountains in the world from Europe to Antarctica, and has always relied on Charantia to help keep his blood sugar levels stable during his climbs.

Geri describes how high altitude and the extreme conditions would raise his blood sugar to dangerous levels: "Once I measured more than 600 mg/dL. This is dangerous." To counter this, Geri regularly brings a flask of Charantia on his expeditions. "I drink it to help me manage high blood sugar in high altitudes."

A role model and spokesperson for diabetic youth in Europe, Geri's ultimate dream is to conquer the Seven Summits - the highest mountains on each of the world's seven continents. And Charantia will be there to help him reach his goal.



"I take it with me everywhere I go," smiles Geri.

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For more information on Charantia and Geri's climb on Everest, visit our website at www.charantia.com

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New mountain to scale for Everest climbers

From page A1

San Miguel, Bulacan.

The members of the First Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition (FPMEE) team will join the Trek to Save Biak-na-Bato next week to stop quarrying operations that are destroying the national park.

FPMEE leader Arturo Valdez, Oracion, the first to reach the summit on May 17, and Emata, who followed a few hours later, had pledged to help the Bulacan provincial government and environmental groups stop marble quarrying in the historical and protected site.

Destruction of history

"I hope every Filipino supports this as well because it's our history that's being destroyed here," Oracion said in Filipino during a press conference in Quezon City yesterday.

Recalling the first time he went to Biak-na-Bato five years ago and his last trek there last year, Oracion noted that the water level of the rivers had declined and trash was left by visitors in the park.

"I was really happy when I went there for the first time. If we destroy it, what will be left for us?" he said.

In a hearing two weeks ago, the Bulacan provincial government and environmentalists had asked the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to cancel the Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) granted to Rosemoor Mining and Development Corp. (RMDC) in December 2002.

The Bulacan provincial government and the environmentalists were still waiting for the decision of the DENR.

Permit since 2002

The MPSA was given to RMDC despite a proclamation in 1989 which declared portions of Biak-na-Bato as protected areas. About 658 hectares had been declared a national park, 938 hectares a watershed forest reserve, 480 hectares a forest reserve and 953 hectares a mineral reservation.

The MPSA was granted in 2002 by former Environment Secretary Heherson T. Alvarez who gave RMDC a permit to extract marble in a 330-hectare area within the mineral reservation.

"As people were interested in our climb to Mt. Everest, we hope they will also be interested in Biak-na-Bato. We are wiping out a national patrimony here, and that is a powerful message," Valdez said.

"This is not just about the desecration of a national heritage but of the environment as well," he added.

Florentino Narciso, another FPMEE member and a UP Mountaineer, said his group often took high school and college students to Biak-na-Bato for their first trek because it was the best place for hiking near Metro Manila.

"As we say, protect nature and nature will protect us. We're here to support the campaign to save Biak-na-Bato for the future generations," Emata said.

Because of its historical significance, Biak-na-Bato was declared a national park by President Manuel L. Quezon on Nov. 16, 1937.

The mountain that extends all the way to San Miguel, Bulacan, served as a base for Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo and his 500 men who escaped from Spanish troops in Batangas.

Deep into mountain

According to local lore, there was a marble slab in one of the stalactite-filled caves that served as the table on which Aguinaldo signed the historic peace pact with the Spaniards.

Quarrying operations, however, had been moved deeper into the mountains despite strong antiquarrying lobbying by Bulacan government officials. This was because the regional director of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau continued to issue ore transport permits to RMDC.

High court clears Pepsi of liability in 1992 flap

THE SUPREME COURT HAS cleared Pepsi Cola of any liability in a promotional flap that sparked lawsuits and riots 14 years ago, the court spokesperson said yesterday.

The June 15 decision, made public Tuesday, found "no proof of negligence" by Pepsi and said the company should not be held liable for damages.

"This should be the defining decision. The lower courts are bound by this decision," said Supreme Court spokesperson Ismael Khan, referring to the numerous suits against Pepsi still pending in trial courts around the country.

In the 1992 "Number Fever" sales campaign, Pepsi Cola Philippines Inc. offered prizes of up to P1 million for holders of bottle caps with winning numbers.

When the number "349" was announced on May 25, 1992, tens of thousands of Filipinos claimed the prize, but Pepsi refused to pay all of them, saying the caps did not contain the proper security codes.

Pepsi said a computer glitch picked the number by mistake.

The high tribunal cited at least three earlier decisions in which it said the security code was "an indispensable element of a winning crown."

"The issues surrounding the '349' incident have been laid to rest and must no longer be disturbed in this decision," the court said.

The company faced more than 1,000 criminal and civil suits, but most have been dismissed, said company lawyer Alexander Poblador.

Poblador said the company paid up to P250 million to nearly 500,000 non-winning claimants as a goodwill gesture.

"I think that was a costly way of appeasing the public," Poblador said.

Pepsi's refusal to pay every claimant also sparked riots and calls for a boycott.

At least 37 company trucks were burned in attacks, including a grenade blast that killed three people in Davao City. The blast forced the company's Davao plant to suspend operations. *AP*

Solon says abolition call by 'loudmouths'

IT'S ALL TALK FROM "A FEW loudmouths."

This was how House Majority Floor Leader Prospero Nograles described the proposal of a group calling for the abolition of the House of Representatives once the 1987 Constitution is revised.

Nograles said he doubted whether the group Tanod ng Bayan could gather enough public support.

"They should run for Congress in their districts to see whether their own voters think they are competent to be congressmen," Nograles said.

"Let's watch how many (votes) they can gather. Or else, it's all talk from a few loudmouths," he added.

Nograles said he doubted whether Tugon ng Bayan would get support even in congressional districts held by the political opposition.

"It's easy to judge others without (testing) your own qualifications and acceptability to your own neighbors. Chances are, when they run, they will lose because their own voters think they are not competent," he said.

Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Teodoro Casiño said that Tanod's proposal had been circulating in the House "as a long-running joke" about Charter change (Cha-cha) proponents.

"That's what Cha-cha proponents say when they run out of arguments. I don't know why they've taken this seriously," Casiño said. "It's the same banana. You elect legislators through districts and then call them senators. It's a joke," he added.

Tugon ng Bayan convenor Francisco Catibayan III proposed on Monday that, should Cha-cha succeed, the House should be abolished instead of the Senate while the country's presidential form of government should also be retained.

He said a strong presidential and unicameral system would work for the country.

Catibayan was a member of the National Youth Commission during the Fidel Ramos administration and one of the prime movers of a campaign for then Sen. Noli De Castro to run for President in 2004. *Philip C. Tubeza*

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Mem'ries in Nueva Ecija, giggles in La Union …

SOME STUDENTS GIGGLED AND laughed while others looked confused as tens of thousands of schoolchildren in the provinces took part in drills to prepare the country for a major earthquake.

In Central Luzon, earthquake drills in Nueva Ecija, Tarlac and Olongapo City in Zambales showed a high level of preparedness among students and rescue teams, said Chief Supt. Ismael Rafanan, chief of the Regional Disaster Coordinating Council.

At the Nueva Ecija High School in Cabanatuan City where he observed the drill, Rafanan said the more than 3,000 students rushed out to the grandstand in an orderly manner. There, they conducted a roll call to find out who among them were missing.

In many parts of Luzon, it helped that local authorities still had memories of the July 16, 1990, tremor that killed about 2,000, including many in Nueva Ecija. Officials used their experience to visualize for the students what potential harm a strong earthquake could do to them, Rafanan said.

No one was hurt in the drills that began simultaneously at 9 a.m. In Nueva Ecija, two students felt dizzy as they waited under the sun.

Rafanan said the scenarios were "realistically staged." Some students acted as victims injured by falling debris or pinned under the rubble.

At the Tarlac City High School, rescue teams used a Huey helicopter from the military's Northern Luzon Command to evacuate "wounded" people in response to a scenario where roads had cracked open and had been rendered impassable.

At the Wesley Elementary and High School in Olongapo, some 1,500 students ducked for cover and moved safely out of their classrooms to an open field. Local disaster coordinating councils supervised the exercises in their areas.

The RDCC will hold the next set of drills in Pampanga and Bataan next week, Rafanan said. A fire and earthquake drill will be held in Zambales in the last week of June.

A drill for tsunami or large waves triggered by undersea quakes is scheduled in Aurora in July, he said.

In Pangasinan, the PA system of the Calasiao Comprehensive National High School continuously chimed at 9 a.m. Minutes later, the rooms were emptied of some 5,000 students who moved into designated safe areas.

The students were calm and some were even laughing.

"Maybe, if there was a real earthquake occurring, I would have jumped from the window," a fourth year student said.

Jessie Caragay, another senior, said he and his classmates were told to "duck, cover and hold" and waited until the "tremor" stopped.

"We were told not to panic," Sonny Solis, a third year student said, as he quietly sat in a corner.

The uninformed

But many students did not really know what was happening. Those outside the classrooms when the warning sounded stayed in their spots, bewildered at why all the other students were leaving.

There was little time to inform the students about the drill, said Lourdes Servito, the principal.

On Friday afternoon, the DepEd called the principals to a briefing, Servito said, but it was only on Monday when she briefed her school's department heads about the drill. The officials, in turn, advised the teachers about it, but some teachers failed to inform their students.

Dagupan City, which was brought down to its knees by the 1990 killer quake, did not hold any drills. No classes were held as the city observed its foundation anniversary.

Socorro Ramos, education supervisor, said the exercise would be conducted in July.

In La Union, some 1,500 students of the La Union National High School in San Fernando City participated. The school and the nearby Christ the King College (elementary department) were two of the 152 regional pilot schools selected to serve as launching venues of the drill.

Nigel Lontoc, Ilocos director of the National Disaster Coordinating Council, said the LUNHS students and teachers gave an "outstanding" performance.

Some 300 Grades 4, 5 and 6 pupils of the Caba Central School in Caba town gathered at the quadrangle two minutes after the drill started.

Some could not suppress their giggles and laughter amid the instructions of their teacher, Aurora Fonbuena, to evacuate. "*Saan met nga agpaypayso* (The earthquake was not real)," some boys said.

In Isabela, at least 400 students from the Isabela Pilot High School for Sports participated.

Armand Araneta, Isabela civil defense officer, said the activity went on smoothly.

A touch of comic relief occurred at a high school in Calapan City, when two students bumped each other on the head. Both were treated for slight injuries after the drill.

Some teachers failed to make an immediate head count at the same school.

Church bells were rung for about 10 minutes as part of the drill.

But Ghie Morales, Sto. Niño parish secretary, said: "I received several calls because of that, from residents asking what the bells were for."

Lost lessons

In Catanduanes, the siren of a fire truck sounded for a full minute before nearly 3,000 students of the Catanduanes National High School (CNHS) and their teachers filed out of their rooms to four designated evacuation areas.

Students and faculty of the island's biggest high school, whose daytime population is about 2,800, were told what to do during the drill at least an hour earlier, but much of the lessons were apparently lost.

Some of the classes were not led by their teachers, and those at the back of the sprawling compound failed to hear the siren and had to be verbally told to begin the drill.

Late preparations

Neil D. Vargas, acting administrator of the Philippine National Red Cross (Catanduanes chapter), emphasized the need for orderly evacuation.

He noted the crowding in the corridors of the two-story main building, and called for the conduct of another drill.

CNHS officer in charge Rudy Tolentino admitted the need for improvement. He said he received the DepEd regional memorandum order on the simultaneous earthquake drill only in the morning of June 19.

The DepEd Catanduanes Division Office received the regional memo on June 16. It took the weekend to be transmitted to the CNHS just 300 meters away, leaving school officials with less than a day to prepare for the drill.

But everything was laid-back and "business as usual" at the Pag-asa National High School, Arimbay extension, at Bliss Site, Bagong Abre, Legazpi City.

Teacher in charge Elizabeth Belbes said the school, one of the five annex high schools of the main campus in Rawis, Legazpi, had yet to receive instructions on the drill but that school authorities and students were unperturbed.

Located 7 km from the foot of Mayon Volcano, the Arimbay extension school, with a population of 302, had been primed for such disasters because of earlier eruptions.

Pending word from their division on the drill, Belbes said they would apply what they had learned from previous emergencies: Don't panic, and stay inside the classrooms.

Padlocked exits

OCD-Central Visayas information officer Neil Angelo Sanchez noted that in the Abellana National School (ANS), one of the city's biggest public schools, the fire exits were padlocked and all the gates leading to the adjoining Cebu City Sports Complex had been permanently sealed.

Sanchez said ANS officials had explained to him that the fire exits were padlocked because they were being used by students to cut classes.

The ANS has a four-story and a two-story building. Its student population is about 4,000.

Sanchez said the hallways of the two buildings were too small for a school with such a big number of students.

'Excellent job!'

In Dumaguete City, the "victims" were ready before the "quake" hit.

No sooner had the alarm sounded than some five "quake victims" were seen sprawled on the ground even before the children filed out of their classrooms.

The students had been conducting evacuation drills since last year, when the West City Elementary School (WCES) was chosen as the testing site for disaster preparedness throughout Negros Oriental.

At least 14 public elementary and high schools in Central Visayas were chosen as pilot schools for the drill.

The police regional director, Chief Supt. Silverio Alarcio, said Central Visayas was prepared to respond to any eventuality based on the result of yesterday's drills.

In Iloilo City, over 4,000 students and around 50 teachers and staff of the Iloilo National High School started the drill at 9:30 a.m.

Many of the students were giggling and even sending text messages, but they generally followed instructions.

Rommel Allan Labayog, Phivolcs coordinator in Zamboanga City, said most of the students were laughing.

"This drill is not a laughing matter. [In the event of a real tremor], that laugh might end up as a shrill cry for help." *Reports from Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk; Fernan Gianan, Ephraim Aguilar, Marlon Ramos, Delfin Mallari and Madonna T. Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; Nestor P. Burgos Jr., Joey A. Gabieta, Alex V. Pal, Carla Gomez, Jhunnex Napallacan, Jolene Bulambot and Jani Arnaiz, PDI Visayas Bureau, and Michael Sarcauga, Aquiles Z. Zonio, Dennis Jay C. Santos, Jeoffrey Maitem, Chris V. Panganiban, Eldie Aguirre and Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Nationwide earthquake drill: Duck, cover, hold

From page A1

(Phivolcs) Director Renato Solidum, Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz, acting Education Secretary Fe Hidalgo, Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando and police and local officials.

Button-presser

Ms Arroyo herself pressed a button at exactly 9 a.m. to formally begin the nationwide drill.

"We should be proactive and not reactive," she said.

At the sound of the alarm, about 2,500 students and teachers ducked under tables and chairs or covered their heads with their hands.

The alarm sounded for about a minute (the usual duration of a strong initial quake). The moment it stopped, the students and teachers started walking in orderly lines toward the open areas at the back of the school and the street in front of it.

They managed to vacate the 42 classrooms in three buildings in less than five minutes.

New rubber boots

The voices of two narrators blared from two giant speakers, explaining that a strong quake was rocking the school in the city across which the Marikina Fault runs.

A fire truck arrived and disgorged fire fighters wearing what looked like new yellow rubber boots and yellow breathing apparatuses.

Hewing to proper procedure, according to the narrators, the fire fighters spoke first with school principal Elizalde Cena before rushing to the canteen that was emitting puffs of smoke (courtesy of a smoke machine).

True to script

Operatives of the Marikina City Rescue 161 also arrived, carried the three "unconscious" students out of the canteen, and applied first aid before loading them into a waiting ambulance.

The three students, complete with soot on their faces, were sweating profusely but motionless, even if the green jogging pants on one of them was sliding to his knees as the rescuers carried him out.

"Good thing I wore shorts underneath," junior student Francis, 15, later told the INQUIRER with a laugh. (His teachers had told him not to smile or move a muscle during the drill.)

The 17 "wounded" students were taken to a treatment area in front of the main building. They were served bottled water and cake as teachers bandaged their arms and legs.

Orange vests

But Ms Arroyo was not quite satisfied by the simulated evacuation and fire and rescue response.

According to Fernando, Ms Arroyo wanted to know why the principal and the teachers were wearing their orange disaster response team vests even before the drill started.

The vests are supposed to be put on when a quake occurs, so the students can easily identify their teachers.

"The President asked why they had their vests on," said Fernando, who was mostly at Ms Arroyo's side during the drill.

Office of Civil Defense (OCD) chief Glenn Rabonza also asked why the students had only their bare arms over their heads.

"They could have used their bags or books, or monobloc chairs which are [made of] hard material," said Rabonza, who is also executive director of the National Disaster Coordinating Council.

He also noted that the fire trucks were already parked nearby, so the response time was not accurately measured.

Over and over again

In her remarks after the drill, Ms Arroyo disregarded a prepared text and spoke off the cuff.

She stressed the need to evaluate the drill based on government-issued pamphlets.

"There will be an evaluation. Were all the instructions followed? If not, this will be done over and over again," she said, adding that the drill should also be conducted in buildings other than schools.

But Ms Arroyo commended Marikina for its "zero casualty" disaster management.

"We will do this again. Eventually we will have unannounced drills, maybe after doing this for three to four times more," Rabonza said.

Cemetery

For the students of the Francisco Benitez Elementary School on Yague Street corner South Avenue in Makati City, the place to run to in the event of a big quake is the cemetery just 100 meters away.

When the bell rang at 9 a.m., more than 2,000 students from kindergarten to the sixth grade calmly trooped to the Manila South Cemetery guided by their teachers.

Covering their heads with their arms, the students sat under the trees towering over the tombs and mausoleums for 15 minutes until they were told to return to their classrooms.

Dr. Ester Montalbo, Department of Education division supervisor for Makati, aired a concern that the trees might get uprooted and fall on the children should a major quake hit.

But school principal Dr. Emilie Zamudio said the cemetery was "the safest evacuation area" nearest the school.

"The only space that can hold a big crowd inside the campus is the quadrangle, but it is a [critical] spot," Zamudio said.

'Don't panic'

At the Commonwealth Elementary School in Quezon City, one of the biggest grade schools in the world, organized chaos was the order of the day.

Within seconds after the shrill whistle sounded, thousands of schoolchildren were lining up and streaming out of the classrooms, led by watchful teachers barking instructions: "Don't panic. No pushing and shoving. Don't walk too slow or too fast."

It took some time before the pupils, all 6,000 of them in the morning shift, filled the square just a few feet from the buildings.

When they were all accounted for, the children were told to sit down and cover their heads with their hands. But because of their sheer number, they were literally bumping into each other.

The 2nd time

After the exercise, all the students were told to go back to their classrooms.

But the drill was not yet over. After a few minutes, the same whistle, blown by assistant principal Willie Cacal, sounded again.

This time, the children's "performance" was much better, said Leo de Leon, an art, music and physical education teacher.

"They were more orderly the second time. And the teachers were more alert. Maybe they were just too excited the first time," he said.

De Leon said the school stood a good chance of surviving a strong earthquake.

But he conceded that the number of pupils—12,000—could pose a problem. *Reports from Edson C. Tandoc Jr., Dona Z. Pazzibugan, Christine O. Avendaño, Jocelyn R. Uy, DJ Yap and Tina G. Santos in Manila*

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No lessons learned from 7.8 Baguio earthquake

From page A1

Rachel Bugtong, principal of the Pines City National High School.

William Rervenia, principal of the Doña Josefa Elementary School, said the exit points of his school were themselves hazards to children, so an earthquake now would trap them inside their rooms.

Bugtong said these building problems were elevated to the Department of Education for rehabilitation and funding in 2004, but it asked the local Parents-Teachers Association to foot the bill instead.

"The PTA could only raise P10,000 [which was too small for repairs] … so the real solution we have is to reduce the number of students we accept each year and that is difficult. We are forced to squeeze in 65 to 68 students in a classroom and they are all in danger during a quake," she said.

Mayor Braulio Yaranon said 8,300 elementary and high school students in the city participated in the drill.

Pilot site for disaster map

Antonio Caluza, a member of the Philippine Institute of Civil Engineers' national board of directors, announced that his group had selected Baguio to be the pilot site for a nationwide map that would identify areas in every town that were vulnerable to disasters.

The PICE was also authorized by the city government to issue public notices specifying the conditions of all structures.

Private engineers are now tasked with posting signs to drive away people from buildings that the PICE may consider unstable, Caluza said. *Reports from Vincent Cabreza, Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Peter La. Julian, Villamor Visaya Jr. and Errol Abrew, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Suit readied over power plant sale

By Philip C. Tubeza

BAYAN MUNA PARTY-LIST REP. TEODORO Casiño and consumer groups are set to file graft charges against officials of the Public Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (Psalm) for bungling the $560-million Masinloc power plant sale.

In a press conference, Casiño said they would charge Psalm officials next week in the Office of the Ombudsman for allowing YNN Pacific Consortium Inc. to violate the Asset Purchase Agreement for the Masinloc plant "and worse, for helping the company get around the conditions of the sale."

He said Psalm officials were guilty of violating the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act and the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees.

"Psalm reneged on its duty and caused substantial pecuniary losses to the government when it failed to foreclose YNN's $11.14-million performance bond even if the buyer already missed two deadlines for the up-front payment of $233 million," Casiño said.

"This also resulted in undue financial gains for YNN," he added.

Casiño said Psalm extended the deadline twice—from Dec 2, 2005, to March 31, 2006, and now to June 30, 2006—in order to give YNN more time to raise funds "which were supposed to be immediately available and paid to the government in December 2005 as specified in the APA."

"Psalm sold Masinloc to a dubious buyer, did not collect the penalty when the buyer failed to pay the down payment, and is now even helping the dubious buyer raise funds. What a crazy way to privatize," he said.

Casiño added that Psalm, by extending the deadline twice, was giving YNN time to "enter into a supply contract" with the Manila Electric Co. (Meralco).

"The supply contract is being required by Malaysian company Ranhill Power Berhad as a condition for its participation in the project," he said.

"The Malaysian company is expected to bring in financial resources and technical capabilities that YNN never had in operating a power plant of Masinloc's size," he said.

Casiño said a draft supply contact had been drawn up and "is up for finalization by the Meralco board." He added that the Energy Regulatory Commission had already suspended the bidding rules "on such contracts to facilitate the agreement."

"The biggest question now is, why would Meralco enter into a supply contract with YNN? What's the quid pro quo? Here's a clue: The ERC is about to rule on Meralco's P20-billion settlement agreement with Napocor," he said.

The INQUIRER tried to contact the Meralco spokesperson but learned he was abroad.

Metro wage board to end hearings

WORKERS IN METRO MANILA WILL BE ANother step closer to getting an increase in their wages as the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board concludes its public hearings today on a wage hike petition from a labor group.

The hearing, to be held at the Occupational Safety and Hazard Center in Quezon City, is the last on the petition for a P75 increase in the daily minimum wage filed by the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines.

The board, which has conducted three consultations on the TUCP petition, will meet on June 23 to assess the data gathered from the public hearings.

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said she expects the board to come out with a wage order in less than the requisite 30 days as the government wants to speed up the issuance of wage orders.

Wage boards in other regions, including those without pending wage hike petitions, are also studying economic indicators and determining reasonable wage increases, according to the labor department.

Workers' groups have demanded an increase in the minimum wage amid the continued rise in the prices of basic commodities.

The House of Representative responded with a move to legislate a P125 across-the-board increase in the daily minimum wage but this was opposed by Malacañang which prefers the regional wage boards as the best method for determining mandated salary increases.

Workers' groups accused Malacañang of pandering to the interests of employers which expressed alarm at the House wage bill. According to industry groups, most businesses cannot afford the amount proposed by the House and warned that it could lead to layoffs.

The militant Alliance of Progressive Labor has called for the abolition of the wage boards, claiming that they had always decided in favor of capitalists. *Leila B. Salaverria*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, June 21, 2006
11th Week in Ordinary Time
Aloysius Gonzaga

1st Reading: 2 K 2:1, 6-14
Gospel: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Jesus said to his disciples, "Be careful not to make a show of your righteousness before people. If you do so, you do not gain anything from your Father in heaven. When you give something to the poor, do not have it trumpeted before you, as do those who want to be seen in the synagogues and in the streets in order to be praised by the people. I assure you, they have been already paid in full.

If you give something to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your gift remains really secret. Your Father who sees what is kept secret, will reward you.

When you pray, do not be like those who want to be seen. They love to stand and pray in the synagogues or on street corners to be seen by everyone. I assure you, they have already been paid in full. When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is with you in secret; and your Father who sees what is kept secret will reward you.

When you fast, do not put on a miserable face as do the hypocrites. They put on a gloomy face, so people can see they are fasting. I tell you this: they have been paid in full already. When you fast, wash your face and make yourself look cheerful, because you are not fasting for appearance or for people, but for your Father who sees beyond appearances. And your Father, who sees what is kept secret will reward you."

Commentary

Elijah must leave, but he leaves Elisha a double portion of spirit with his mantle (of justice and truth) and the power is passed from one prophet to another. Jesus too is seeking to pass on his power of justice and truth and his teaching is forthright. We are to practice our religion for God alone, to give alms in gratitude and to pray silently and alone; to fast and not make a show of religious ritual. God who is hidden sees all and we are seen truthfully before God, and will be judged by our hearts and not by what we appear to be in public.

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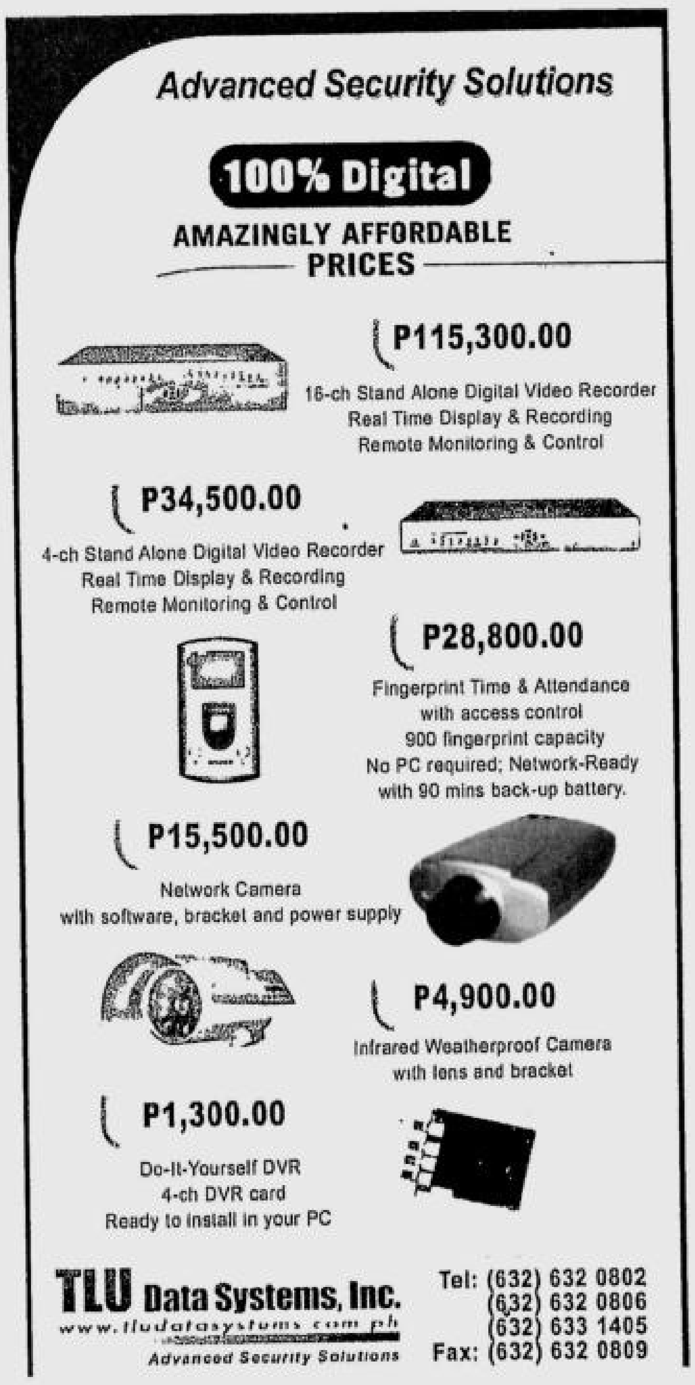
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Poverty serious RP problem, Noli tells world meet

By Cynthia D. Balana

VICE PRESIDENT NOLI DE CASTRO said yesterday that poverty remained a serious problem in the Philippines despite government measures to improve the lives of the urban poor.

Speaking at the third session of the World Urban Forum (WUF3) organized by UN Habitat in Vancouver, Canada, De Castro said the urban poor in the Philippines had endured "mixed" conditions in the last 16 years.

While the poverty incidence went down from 44.2 percent in 1985 to 30.4 percent in 2003, the number of poor families rose as a result of population growth, migration to urban centers and limited resources to provide for the needs of the poor, he said.

De Castro spoke at the dialogue session "Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): Slum Upgrading and Affordable Housing" which opened with a clip from the 1990 documentary film "On Borrowed Land," which examined the urban crisis in Manila arising from the post-Edsa flood of rural migrants and the emergence of sprawling squatter communities along Manila Bay.

"Perhaps the most dramatic symbol is our successful transformation of the erstwhile icon of urban poverty in the Philippines—Smokey Mountain—into a commercial and residential center," he said.

'Voluntary evictions'

However, there were many more urban poverty problems that the government still needed to address, De Castro admitted.

On the issue of "voluntary evictions" undertaken by the government to pave the way for the rehabilitation of major railways, he stressed that demolitions and evictions were avoided or deferred "as long as the continued stay of informal settlers in their present sites do not pose a danger to others or to themselves."

Whenever feasible, the government would regularize the tenure of informal settlers through presidential proclamations disposing of public land as socialized housing sites, he said.

De Castro also explained that "voluntary eviction" was part of the "beneficiary-led and localized" resettlement program for informal settlers affected by the clearing operations as in the case of the North-South Rail Linkage project.

Peaceful relocation

The resettlement program, he said, resulted in the peaceful relocation of all the families of Phase 1 of the NorthRail alignment.

He also said that the government remained "committed to wage a relentless battle against poverty in our cities and urban areas."

De Castro also met with UN Habitat Executive Director Anna Tibaijuka during which he reiterated the country's support of the goals of the habitat agenda "both at the national and international levels."

He assured Tibaijuka that the government would continue to champion the principles of the twin campaigns on secure tenure and good urban governance supported by UN Habitat.

Some 15,000 participants from different countries attended the WUF3, whose theme was "Our Future: Sustainable Cities – Turning Ideas into Action."

Pinoy pleads guilty to alien smuggling

NEWARK, NEW JERSEY—A FILIPINO MAN pleaded guilty Monday to smuggling more than 25 people from the Philippines into the United States illegally.

Roehl Rivera of Cabanatuan City faces up to five years in prison. His sentencing is set for Sept. 27.

In pleading guilty to a single conspiracy charge, Rivera implicated a former driver at the Micronesian Embassy in Washington D.C., Enrico Calderon, who was indicted in May and is awaiting trial.

Calderon, 41, of Springfield, Virginia, has pleaded not guilty and is being held without bail. Besides a conspiracy charge, he faces five counts of smuggling aliens for money, a charge that carries three to 10 years in prison.

Rivera said the scheme to smuggle illegal immigrants through Newark Liberty International Airport ran from May 2004 through January 2006. Rivera was arrested at the airport Jan. 5 after using Micronesian passports from Calderon for himself and three Filipinos, authorities said.

Doctored passports

According to the Calderon indictment, he charged up to $15,000 each for doctored passports stolen from the embassy.

Micronesia, referred to only as "Country M" in official documents because of US Justice Department requirements, has a relationship with the United States that allows holders of its passports to live and work in the US without a visa.

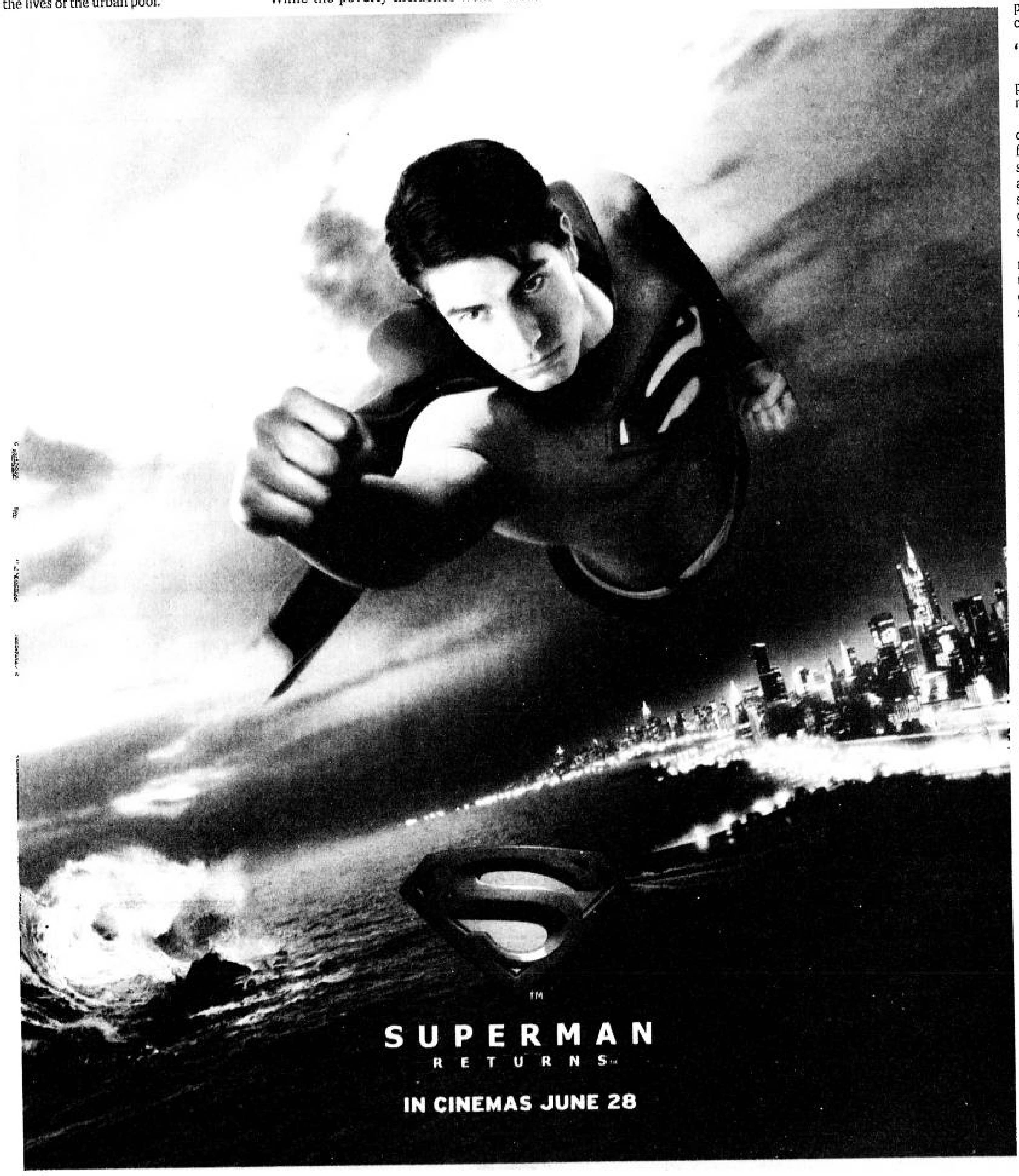
"The aliens did not have a right to travel under that agreement," said Seth Kosto, an assistant US attorney for the District of New Jersey.

Rivera made at least four trips from Hong Kong to Newark with parties of aliens, who were trained to answer questions about "Country M" if questioned by US immigration officers, the statement said.

Rivera was only paid between $400 and $500 per trip, according to prosecutors.

The "Country M" passports were obtained by Calderon who worked as a driver for the country's Washington embassy, Kosto said.

AP; Reuters



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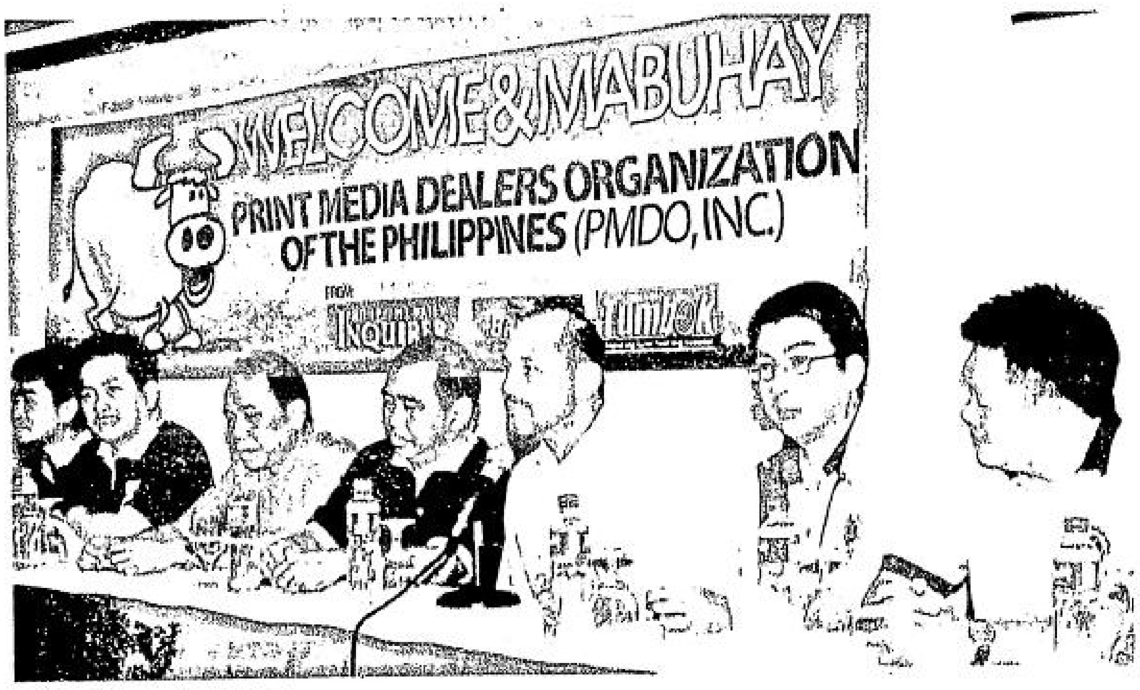
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NEWS DEALERS MEET
The Philippine Daily Inquirer was a sponsor of the 2nd Print Media Dealers Organization of the Philippines (PMDO Inc.) Convention held recently at the Development Academy of the Philippines Conference Center in Tagaytay City. Shown in photo are (from left) PMDO chair Danilo Jose, National Dealers Association president for Visayas lawyer Raymund Mercado, Dealers Association for Central Luzon president Owen Fuertes, Dealers Association for Mindanao president Pete Marquez, PDI EVP and COO David Valdes, PDI SVP for Sales and Marketing Rene Reinoso and PDI AVP for Circulation Sandy Simon Yap. RUDY ESPERAS

Sacked prosecutor appeals case

A STATE PROSECUTOR WHO WAS recently dismissed from the government service for habitual absenteeism yesterday asked Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez to take a second look at her case, claiming her dismissal was "tainted with malice."

Luz Quiñones-Marcos, who was a special prosecutor officer III when she was dismissed, said the two officers who signed her dismissal papers—Deputy Ombudsman Orlando Casimiro and Deputy Ombudsman for the Visayas Primo Miro—had been the subjects of a "patent prejudice" complaint she had filed earlier with the Internal Affairs Board of the Ombudsman's Office.

She also noted that Casimiro was her rival for the position of overall deputy Ombudsman, the office's second highest post.

In a motion for reconsideration dated June 13, 2006, Marcos asked that the dismissal order be set aside for "grave factual and legal errors" in the evaluation of evidence.

Marcos said the decision to dismiss her should be voided because she was denied due process when Casimiro and Miro took part in the deliberations of her case.

She alleged that Casimiro and Miro had shown "manifest partiality" for Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio who filed the "dishonesty and conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service" because of the habitual absenteeism complaint against her.

Marcos questioned the timing of the release of the decision, which was released through a press statement while the Judicial Bar Council was considering her and Casimiro for the overall deputy Ombudsman post.

Villa-Ignacio denied that Marcos was not given due process. He said she was adequately informed of the charges and given time to rebut them.

"Marcos was a headache in this office because of her habitual absenteeism," he said. *Nelson F. Flores*

PRC denies leak in nursing boards

By Alcuin Papa

THE PROFESSIONAL REGULATORY Commission (PRC) denied yesterday there was a leak of test questions in this month's nursing board exams.

In a statement to the INQUIRER, the PRC also invited witnesses to the supposed leakage to surface and formally file their statements with the commission, adding that it had yet to receive a formal complaint on the issue.

The PRC also said that "after an initial investigation by the Board of Nursing, the BON concluded there was no apparent leakage."

It said the examination system "has been so streamlined that leakages are now a thing of the past."

The last nursing board exam was administered nationwide on June 11 and 12. The exams are given twice a year in June and December.

Rumors and a TV news report said the leakage was traced to a review center in Baguio City. An examinee, who refused to identify herself and who hid her face from the cameras, claimed the review center gave out test questions that would come out in the exam.

"On television, the witness hid her identity making it impossible for the PRC to establish whether or not she was a real examinee," the statement said.

"Unless hard evidence is found, the system is nearly fool-proof. With the actual test questions extracted by computer from a database of questions, even the examiners do not know beforehand which of their questions will be asked in the examinations. The test questions are printed inside a quarantined area with security provided by police and the National Bureau of Investigation," the PRC said.

The agency noted that "observers say that the reported leakage was the result of intense rivalry among review centers."

The PRC said that contrary to rumors, it had not cancelled the exams but was now checking the results which are expected to be released next month.

"Compliance testing which is regularly done to determine the statistical probability of results will also be used after the corrections to establish the validity of the test," the PRC said.

A review center, meanwhile, denied any involvement in the alleged leak.

In its own statement to the INQUIRER, the R.A. Gapuz Review Center Inc. said: "While certain quarters have been maliciously spreading nasty and unfounded rumors about our alleged involvement, we have not received any formal complaint regarding the same. In fact, we are not aware that there was indeed a leakage. Thus, we object to these malicious imputations against our review center."

Freed terror suspect wants prosecutor to 'know terror'

A SUSPECTED MEMBER OF THE Rajah Solaiman Movement (RSM)—which allegedly hatched the deadly Superferry bombing in 2004—has asked the Department of Justice to assign State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco to Mindanao so he could meet "real terrorists" for a change.

In a complaint of grave misconduct filed by Nururrija Amdal, who was arrested with suspected RSM head Hilarion Santos III in Zamboanga City on Oct. 25, 2005, the former accused Velasco of fabricating evidence to justify the filing of rebellion charges against them.

"I want (Velasco) to be assigned in Mindanao so that he can deal with real terrorists, and stop his make-believe rebellion here in Manila," said Amdal, a Zamboanga City native who was charged with rebellion along with Santos and seven others.

She and five others picked up in Zamboanga City were recently freed after the rebellion charge against them was ordered dropped by a Makati court for lack of probable cause. They had spent eight months in jail.

Amdal, in the complaint filed last Friday, took Velasco to task for presenting them to the "media as terrorists."

She also accused Velasco of threatening former co-accused Malik Alimuddin to sign a "pre-fabricated extra-judicial confession" which became the basis of the rebellion charges filed against them.

Alimuddin, who was first identified as a state witness, recently recanted his statement owning up to the spate of bombing, reportedly committed by the RSM, which is reportedly linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terrorist network.

By Armand N. Nocum

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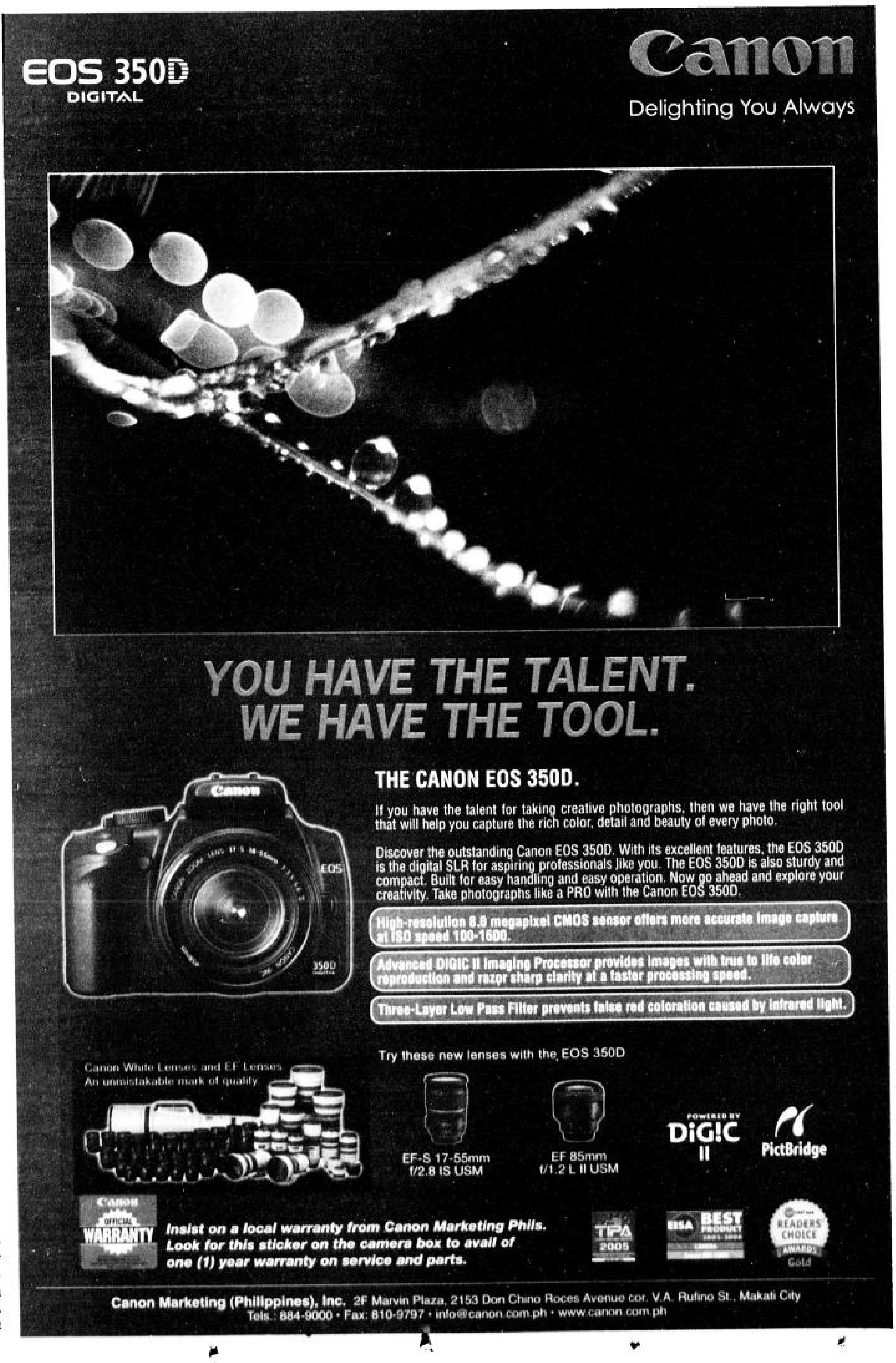
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Litmus test

EDITORIAL

THE DESIRE TO ASSERT JURISDICTION OVER American soldiers who have violated Philippine laws is nothing new. In "A Diplomatic History of the Philippine Republic: The First Years 1946-1961," Milton Walter Meyer pointed out that prior to World War II, the Philippine Commonwealth "sought to elaborate, without success, Philippine jurisdiction over criminal acts committed by American servicemen." Since the Visiting Forces Agreement was signed over a decade ago, that lack of success, it seems, has become permanent.

Last May, a petition filed through her lawyers by rape victim "Nicole" was set aside by the Makati Regional Trial Court (Branch 139). The petition asked the court to declare two provisions of the Visiting Forces Agreement unconstitutional. The provisions grant the United States custody over any of its soldiers accused of crimes, and set a one-year deadline for the trial. Now, acting through her lawyers, "Nicole" has asked the Supreme Court to set aside the trial court's decision. The VFA provisions, according to the lawyers, are essentially discriminatory: they place American servicemen in a "privileged position," compared to Filipinos accused of the same crimes.

The government's response is that broader policy must be sacrificed to specifics, since the US government won't be interested in debates over the Constitution or Philippine laws but will instead focus on absolute compliance with existing agreements. According to Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, the VFA is strict and absolute: Once the clock starts ticking, Filipinos have one year to obtain a verdict from the courts. And once the specified period lapses, the United States can assert that it has complied with its obligations and make the accused unavailable to face further proceedings.

A treaty commitment, even when lopsided (the Philippines views the VFA as a formal treaty ratified by the Senate; the United States considers it merely as an executive agreement), does entail compliance between two parties, regardless of whether one party grumbles about the iniquitous nature of the agreement. It can be said that this is particularly true when dealing with influential nations. For this reason, despite their origins in the period of the defunct Chinese Empire, the People's Republic of China as successor government abided by imperialist-era treaties with the United Kingdom and Portugal over Hong Kong and Macao.

But it is the kind of pragmatic thinking espoused by Gonzalez that betrays the fatal flaw in how the Philippine government views not only its existing obligations, but the bargaining that goes into them. The VFA is merely one of many contracts embarked upon by the Philippines that have proven so disadvantageous that they cry out for correction (the Fraport deal is another example, on the business side). Yes, it can be argued that a contract must always be upheld, but it does not mean that future contracts should be of that nature. And any contract, if proven manifestly unfair, should be renegotiated.

If Gonzalez and the government had their way, not only would the appeal of "Nicole" be thrown out but any kind of reconsideration would be forbidden. The harsh reality may be that "Nicole" will have to suffer because of the over-obliging nature of the Philippine negotiators who drafted, and approved, the VFA. But hers should, at the very least, be the last case of this kind, where, indeed, as her lawyers assert, a Filipina in her unfortunate situation would have found it easier to obtain justice if her rapist was a fellow citizen and not a foreign soldier.

There are cases considered litmus tests, that is, they serve to illustrate whether existing law or policy is fair or just. The present rape case is one such case. It will establish parameters for the assertion of the rights of the nationals of two allied nations with regard to accusations of criminal behavior by individuals. In this precedent-setting case, our government cannot forget its foremost duty, which is to assert the impartiality of the law to Filipinos and foreigners alike.

The appeal, then, not only deserves the fullest consideration by the Supreme Court, but the strongest support from its chief opponent, the Department of Justice.

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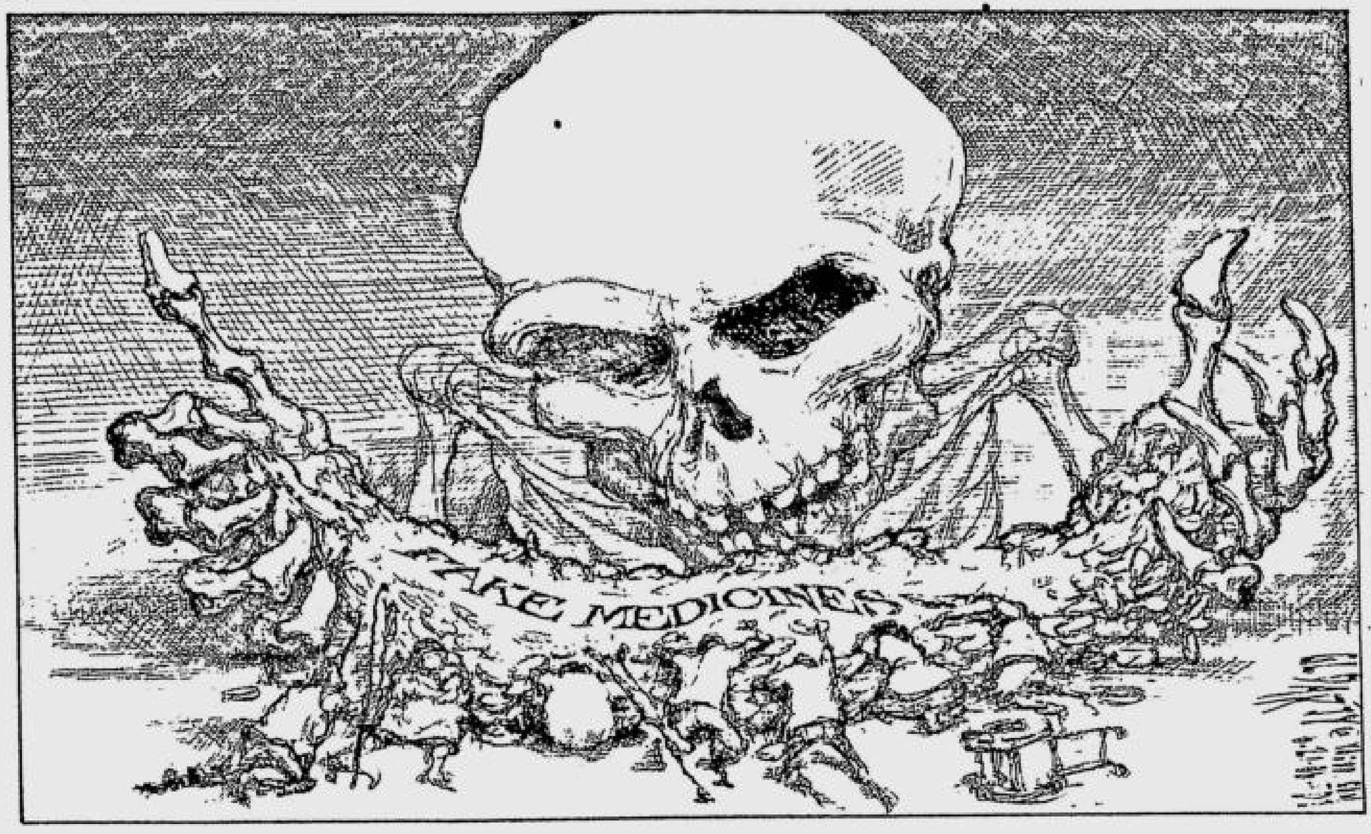

Abandoned Lafayette pits worse than Diwalwal

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

YES, THE LAFAYETTE MINING FIRM CHEATED in reporting the volume of its mined metals on Rapu-Rapu island. Yes, it may have cheated on its tax payments. Yes, it violated mining rules. No, it did not have enough safeguards. Yes, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) was negligent in monitoring Lafayette's mining operations.

All of these Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes admitted at last Monday's Kapihan sa Manila (Hotel). But the repercussions of closing down Lafayette and abandoning the open pit mines could be worse, he said. If the mine is closed and the pits are abandoned, small-scale miners would invade it like they have done in Diwalwal in Mindanao and the result would be much worse. They would dig into the mountainside and tunnels would collapse and kill miners.

Small-scale miners use mercury to separate the metal from the ore. Mercury is a very stable poisonous metal that does not break down. It accumulates in the body and is transferred from body to body. It is ingested by fish and when you eat the fish, you ingest the mercury which increases in your body until you are poisoned and you suffer the very painful Minimata disease that wastes away your limbs and body until you die. Rapu-Rapu would be another gold-rush site where crime and chaos would reign. After the mines are exhausted, the miners would leave and nobody would cover up the pits and plant trees and put the site back to its former condition.

With a big mining company operating it, you can impose controls in the mines and when they are exhausted, the company, under our mining laws, is mandated to put it back to its pristine condition, Reyes said. And anyway, the 30-day testing period does not mean the mining firm will be allowed to continue operating permanently. If the tests are unsatisfactory, Lafayette will be closed.

The testing period, Reyes explained, would be done in three stages to find out the efficiency of Lafayette's operations. If at any stage it is discovered that there are flaws in the operations and the safeguards, the mines would be permanently closed. Only when everything is in perfect working condition would the firm be allowed to reopen, he said.

* * *

The Philippine Tourism Authority's Robert Dean Barbers, also a guest at the Kapihan, gave the assurance that the Atis of Boracay are not being driven away from their ancestral land. The whole of Boracay island, now the Philippines' premier tourist spot, is still public domain, but because of the tourism boom there, parts of it are being titled to resort owners, including foreigners (non-Filipinos are not allowed to own real estate here), and the native Atis are being forced out of choice beachfront sites.

Barbers said the Atis are being given lots and jobs and houses are being built for them. The problem is that many Atis living in cities and other islands have gone back to Boracay due to the tourism boom so there is a sudden population boom of Atis there.

Why are foreigners being given more priority than the natives? Barbers was asked. How come they are able to get titles to lots when they are not allowed to own property in the Philippines?

Barbers replied that the foreigners are married to Filipinos and the titles are in the names of their spouses.

But Boracay island is still public domain and cannot be titled to private individuals, so all those titles are illegal and void, the two guests were told.

Reyes agreed that the titles could be "void ab initio" (void from the very beginning, as though no title was issued at all).

Barbers replied that cases to cancel the titles have been filed in court.

But since the titles were "void ab initio," they are assumed to be non-existent and the government doesn't have to prove anything, they were told. It is the holders of these titles who have to prove that they have a legal right to them. It is the Atis who have a legal right to Boracay because of the law on ancestral domain. Shouldn't the resort owners pay rent to the Atis as they are doing to the American Indians and the Australian aborigines? Now is the time for all good lawyers to come to the aid of the Atis.

Isn't Boracay already overdeveloped? Barbers was asked.

Barbers replied that it is the beachfronts that are overdeveloped but that inner sites are still undeveloped.

Shouldn't the PTA develop other islands and other tourist spots?

Yes, the PTA is scouting for other sites.

Why is Sta. Cruz island, with the fine pink sand off Zamboanga, not being promoted?

Because there is a pending court case between different claimants.

Under our laws, foreshore areas cannot be titled to private individuals and fenced. They must always be open to the public.

True, and we are monitoring foreshore areas.

What about reclaimed land?

Lots adjacent to the sea cannot be titled to private entities.

We will look into that.

* * *

Although there are still many, too many, irresponsible pet owners, there are indications that more and more owners are taking better care of their pets. This can be gleaned from the increase in the number of veterinarians and veterinary clinics. The most successful of them all is the Animal House group of animal clinics and grooming centers.

Animal House celebrated its 20th anniversary last June 16. It was started in 1986 by Dr. Michael Kao and Dr. Edgar Unson in a tiny storefront across from the old Magnolia plant on Aurora Boulevard in Quezon City. It now has 14 clinics and centers. We have been a steady client since its founding. To Doctors Michael, Cielo, Hannah and Joy, thanks for taking care of our animal companions.

Street life

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'VE NOTICED, BUT THE streets of Metro Manila today are full of tricycles, motorcycles and bicycles. I used to see them only on odd hours, the bicycles and tricycles in particular venturing into the main thoroughfares to the unseeing or unmindful eyes of cops and traffic enforcers only when traffic was light. But today they're there at all hours, not just turning nightmarish traffic during rush hour into absolute torment but threatening to cause a host of mayhem, accidental or deliberate, on the streets.

That is so particularly because the tricycles, motorcycles and bicycles no longer bother to keep to the sides of the streets. They overrun them on all sides, weaving through and dodging motor vehicles as though they were in a video game. For some reason, none of the drivers or riders appears to think he is governed by traffic rules. Who knows? Maybe there's a perverse logic that says that if you shouldn't be driving a tricycle or riding a bicycle on Quezon Avenue or Edsa in the first place, then you are *ipso facto* exempted from traffic rules.

The solution to this is not to banish motorcycles, tricycles and bicycles from the face of the earth, or the streets of Metro Manila. My irritation at encountering these things in the main thoroughfares has long given way to an appreciation of the fact that gasoline today may now qualify as a prize in contests. It's a fortune in itself. And I am not a little dismayed that the oil companies should continue to advertise their product without a thought to this. Some of the ads are plain indulgent. They offend sensibilities, if not rub salt on wound. Obviously the reason the motorcycles, tricycles and bicycles are advancing like Attila's horde today is that gasoline prices bore a hole in the pocket. My sympathies go to bicycles in particular, which don't use any.

The solution is to put bicycle lanes in the main streets. That's for bicycles and motorbikes; tricycles should clearly be kept to the side streets. It's a cause some of my friends, who believe, completely rightly, that bicycles are healthier physically and financially, have been fighting for for many years. Now more than ever, they have reason to push it vigorously.

Put bicycle lanes on the main streets. Cars, buses and jeepneys found poaching on them should be stopped and their drivers given a ticket, fined, or extorted from, whichever puts a bigger chill in their hearts.

It should help to improve health, the individual's and the nation's. The individual stands to enjoy more exercise, or at least suffer fewer accidents, and the nation stands to conserve more fuel. Some small things have a way of producing big results.

* * *

"I think that I shall never see/ A billboard lovely as a tree/ Perhaps unless the billboards fall/ I'll never see a tree at all."

That's Ogden Nash's famous parody of Joyce Kilmer's famous poem, and it's hard not to be taken in by its spirit, particularly in these times. There's a raging debate going on about billboards, with some of my friends on the side of those bitterly opposing them. My sympathies are with them.

My concern, however, is not moral. I have no beef with the sight of men and women in the throes of suggestive poses clad only in the near-pristine state God made them. Who on earth doesn't like that—other of course than people who believe sensuality, not to speak of sexuality, is the serpent's invention? I wouldn't mind falling in Hieronymus Bosch's garden of earthly delights. My beef is people being given to feast on these sights when their eyes should be riveted only to the road.

The billboards are a road hazard. The big one in Guadalupe in particular poses the added hazard of blinding drivers with its ferocious light. Given that motorcycles and bicycles are currently swarming like locusts on the streets, well, you'd almost think the hospitals and funeral parlors were paying the perpetrators of this atrocity to improve their business.

My sympathies go as well to my friends who have been complaining about the environmental and aesthetic degradations or depredations being wrought by the billboards. I know Edsa does not offer the most pleasant view in the world (I laughed my head off many years ago when the people opposing the building of the MRT argued that it was an aesthetic outrage to Edsa), but do we really need to uglify it for no other reason than to advertise clothes, or the lack of them?

As to the environment, well, I'll go along with Pareng Ogden. Perhaps unless the billboards fall, I'll never see a tree at all.

* * *

I saw it in the twilight years of Marcos' rule: Quezon Avenue teeming with ladies of the night at night, and indeed at one point, in the daytime. I see it again today. Past midnight, in particular, the place starts accumulating women and men in drag who vigorously hail cars the way commuters hail cabs in furious rain. It used to be that they were just content to wait for the desperate to stop by them.

Sign of the times. The last years of martial law also saw resolute efforts to hide reality with billboards, metaphorical and literal, the regime saying life had never been better. A thing even more resolutely refuted by those who braved rain, cops and shady characters, the last two often being one and the same, selling body to keep body and soul together. Roxanne sounds romantic only in song, not in real life. You can't get a more vivid, if poignant, indicator of today's quality of life than the sudden increase of late of the tribe of fallen Eves on the streets. Street life, street death.

Shortly after Quezon Avenue became that in the twilight years of Marcos' rule, the sun set on Marcos' rule. Truly, sign of the times.

A sinister plan to butcher civilians

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

NO SOONER HAD THE INK DRIED ON PRESIdent Macapagal-Arroyo's declaration of "all-out war" to crush the 37-year communist insurgency in two years than the Armed Forces jumped into the fray with a lust for blood and battle not seen since the height of the military campaign against the Hukbalahap rebellion in 1949-1952. At the time, the young post-war republic faced the grave threat of being overrun by the communist revolution with the Huks, already then with an armed strength of no less than 10,000 men, knocking at the outer perimeter of Manila which was surrounded by sandbags and checkpoints at its approaches.

Days after the President's declaration, the Armed Forces reinforced the troops deployed in the military drive in Central, Northern and Southern Luzon with troops withdrawn from Mindanao. The redeployment unveiled the mailed fist of the campaign.

At no time since 1950 has the life of the republic and Philippine democracy been seriously threatened by the Marxist revolution—until the Arroyo administration reinvented a life-and-death scenario for the republic by resurrecting the Red nightmare of the 1940s, half a century later and 17 years after the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the Iron Curtain.

The administration is now telling the Filipino people that they are facing the gravest threat to the survival of democracy from the continuing and exaggerated communist insurgency. The government has identified the "leftists" as the foremost "enemies of the state," in an attempt to rally public opinion behind this spurious anti-communist campaign.

In this new campaign, the administration is constructing the specter of communist takeover on little more than an imagined threat that has no basis in fact, evidence or historical reality. The exaggeration of the threat undermines the credibility of the scare campaign, and dooms it to failure in galvanizing popular support.

The public perception of this spurious threat is that it is not the republic that faces overthrow from the overblown insurgency, but rather it is the regime's life that is threatened—but not by the leftists but by the resurgent reactionary Right in the Armed Forces, which the President has now deployed as the spearhead of her campaign. The regime and its military allies are deluding themselves if they believe that their perception of the communist threat is shared by the rest of the population. The civil sector has gotten used over decades with being intimidated by the communist scare to know that the security of the state is not identical with the security of the regime. And this explains why the campaign has no resonance with the broad sector of public opinion.

The Arroyo campaign has a heavy military accent and is short on the civic action component (that is, "winning the hearts and mind" of the people) that made President Ramon Magsaysay's insurgency campaign of the 1950s moderately successful. President Arroyo's campaign is driven by the strategy of instilling fear of punitive and repressive police action. By contrast, the military side of the Magsaysay campaign was built mainly on the combat efficiency of Philippine Constabulary battalion combat teams, exemplified by Col. Napoleon Valeriano's elite Nenita Unit (the Skull and Bones strike force), the nemesis of the Huk guerrillas.

Today, Ms Arroyo's anti-communist strike forces are led by officers who lack the military brilliance of Valeriano but with reputations and records of atrocities against civilians and non-combatants exceeding the worst atrocities perpetrated by the Nenita Unit.

The blueprint of war outlined in the "orders of battle" of Oplan Bantay Laya envisages decimation of the non-military segments of the communist movement. It is not designed to engage the New People's Army in armed conflict in field warfare. It is designed to butcher and massacre defenseless non-combatants. It is therefore a sinister plan for civilian butchery, a strategy which exposes the military and police to fewer risks and casualties than they would face in armed fighting with the communist guerrillas.

This strategy is different from the Magsaysay campaign spearheaded by the Nenita Unit, which engaged the Huks in firefights more than it cracked down on the urban cadres of the Communist Party in the trade unions.

One document made available to the INQUIRER on Oplan Bantay Laya lists targeted sectoral front groups "advancing the revolutionary struggle of the Left."

The disclosure followed the upsurge of killings of Left-wing militants since 2001, totaling more than 200 members of the legal Bayan Muna party-list organization. The principal suspects behind these killings are paramilitary death squads. According to an INQUIRER source, documents "don't say that members of sectoral groups are to be killed but they do use the term neutralize—a term implicitly understood by the underworld of Philippine politics as a go-ahead for death squad assassinations."

The emphasis of this strategy on "neutralizing" sectoral/front/legal organizations helps explain why most of the victims of the past five years have been non-combatants and defenseless members of the Left. During that period, the number of murdered aboveground members of the Left has far exceeded fatalities of the NPA in armed encounters with security forces.

This strategy is blamed for the systematic massacre of non-combatants. It offers a huge potential for human rights abuses and atrocities. It makes the regime look more cold-blooded in its methods in trying to crush the insurgency than its predecessors, not excluding the Marcos dictatorship. It opens the path to the slaughter of the defenseless.

Bless the 'lukayos'!

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

WHEN MAGELLAN'S EXPEDITION LANDED ON Philippine shores in 1521, Antonio Pigafetta, the navigator and self-appointed chronicler of the voyage, wrote of his early encounters with the "natives," particularly the women who to him seemed unaccountably licentious and sexually liberated.

Women figured prominently in the society Pigafetta encountered, particularly the *babaylanes* or priestesses who presided over rituals by which the community sought to communicate with the spirit world, and who knew all the secrets of the healing arts. Thus, when the contingent of Miguel Lopez de Legazpi re-asserted Spanish authority in 1565 (after the rout of Magellan's forces by Lapu-lapu), the combined forces of the conquistadores and *frailes* went after the *babaylanes*, whom they systematically sought to wipe out through executions and by burning their ancient texts. And yet, *babaylanes* lore persists, the healing arts preserved in the work of *hilots* or traditional healers, who passed on their knowledge through generations that followed. The sharing of knowledge was done clandestinely, in secret and in hiding. As a *hilot*, talking to researchers, put it: "By hiding, we fought back."

As for the role of *babaylanes* as shamans, mediators between the earth-bound and the spirits, it persists in various cults and in folk traditions celebrating what has become known (thanks to Dan Brown) as the "divine feminine," and the role of woman as repository of life.

This much is evident in "Lukayo: Hindi Ito Bastos," a documentary by Howie Severino which aired last May 22 on GMA-7's "I-Witness" that documents the work of folkloric scholar Ramon Obusan, who was recently named National Artist for Dance, and the practices of the old women of Kalayaan, Laguna, who perform bawdy dances and songs at weddings with the help of massive phalluses.

* * *

FERTILITY rites and phallic symbols have long been recognized as staples of folk culture, that is, the culture that existed before "Christianization" and "colonization," and which lies just below the surface of "civilization." We can no more deny this than wipe it out. And yet, by seeking to censure Severino and GMA-7 for airing "Lukayo," the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board is taking on the mantle of the *frailes*, who rushed to put blouses on bare-breasted tribal women and imposed the concept of malice (and sin) on a society where partial nudity was considered natural.

In her account of the MTRCB hearing, Sheila Coronel of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) wrote that "it was clear the MTRCB committee, headed by lawyer Manuel Cases, found the episode ... distasteful and objectionable."

Obusan, who was present at the hearing to testify in defense of Severino (who is also a board member of PCIJ), "explained that the *lukayo* are the keepers of a tradition. 'Where is the dividing line between malice and accepting and appreciating tradition as part of what we've inherited from the past?' he asked."

But, as Coronel documents, Cases and other committee members refused to buy the anthropological argument. As Cases put it: "The problem is how the show was presented. Sure, it is their tradition—they want to play with dildos. That's what it is. To me, that's how it looked, they like to play with dildos... But we have to see this in the context of the law and the viewing public. This should not be shown to young people. They will not understand. We received complaints. There was confusion. Some of the phalluses looked real."

* * *

I WOULDN'T be surprised if the *lukayos* of Kalayaan should rally before the MTRCB offices and brandish their wooden phalluses in the face of Cases as retaliation for his insults and ignorance, especially for describing them as simply wanting to "play with dildos."

"*Lukayo*," so the women tell Severino, is really shorthand for "*luka-luka kayo* (you're all crazy)," apparently what some of their neighbors might have called out to the women as they dressed in outlandish costumes, tied wooden outsize phallic symbols (which no one in his right mind would mistake for the real thing, unless fueled by delusion) to their waists, then paraded through the streets of the barrio. Meeting up with newlyweds, they surrounded the couple and serenaded them with bawdy songs and suggestive rituals that, so they explained, were meant to bless husband and wife with the gift of fertility.

There was plenty of humor and jollity in the "*lukayo*" ritual, but no malice. This, even if the new parish priest in Kalayaan looked on disapprovingly and declared his condemnation of the people's fascination with "(symbols of) immorality ... like the penis."

* * *

THE PENIS is by itself immoral? That's a new take on sexual politics!

Viewing Severino's documentary, I wanted to take the *lukayos* in my arms and bless them—for their fidelity to the cause of preserving the culture of the *babaylanes*, their bravery in the face of community displeasure, and their audacity in giving patriarchy, especially the sexual entitlement that men take for granted, the finger.

Most of all, I wanted to bless them for their humor and good spirits, for the joy with which they embarked on their rituals, and the sisterhood they shared, a sisterhood that I hope they will pass on to succeeding generations.

Surely, the MTRCB has more pressing concerns than to find malice in a scholarly—and sympathetic—portrayal of a facet of our culture that has come under relentless attack by colonialists, moralists and hypocrites for centuries, and yet manages to survive, with humor and gaiety intact. Would that the worthies of the MTRCB find a sense of humor—and intelligence—about this matter, too.

Aguinaldo's education

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

IT'S THAT TERRIBLE TIME OF THE YEAR again, the opening of classes.

My childhood summers were spent with my cousins either in Pampanga or in Baguio. We played all day, had no rules, had no homework—our uncles and aunts spoiled us rotten. We could watch TV all day and wake up as late as we wished. Summer break was truly a treat, so that every year we dreaded the trip down the zig-zag road when, at a certain point where we rolled up the windows and turned on the car aircon, my father would utter those horrible words, "Sorry folks, vacation is over."

Getting up early was the biggest of my problems (having to deal with homework and being starved of television was icing on the cake). The funny thing about school is that you hate it when you are there, but in later life you look back with fondness and nostalgia to a time of carefree innocence that disappeared when you entered the real world and started to work for a living.

Everyone is familiar with Jose Rizal's early education at his mother's lap. We know about the private tutor who died on him, and the schoolmaster of Biñan who beat him daily. We know about Rizal's stellar grades in the Ateneo Municipal but are not given the details of his rather average grades in the University of Santo Tomas. It would be interesting to know how our heroes (or maybe even our presidents) were educated because it may provide clues on the way they conducted themselves when they moved out of a classroom and, for better or worse, shaped the Philippines into what we are today.

Emilio Aguinaldo may not be everyone's favorite hero, but he left a very readable and interesting memoir in Tagalog titled, "Mga Gunita ng Himagsikan." Unfortunately, most people who read this do so for work or research—they want to find out about the conduct of the revolution or look for hints on the deaths of Andres Bonifacio and Antonio Luna—so they miss the very human portrait painted on its pages. In some parts, it is more interesting than Rizal's memoirs.

For example, Rizal's mother had a difficult childbirth because the hero's head was oversized. She got through by praying to the Virgin of Antipolo. In Emilio Aguinaldo's case, it was also a long delivery cut short when the hero's father lighted firecrackers around the bedside and so startled both mother and baby that little Emilio was literally born with a bang. The first smell that entered his nostrils was gunpowder, and this probably explains why he was at home in the battlefields of the Philippine Revolution and the Filipino-American War.

Aguinaldo's early education started at home. He wrote:

"I still recall that during my childhood, one of the toys that my beloved father gave me was a huge basket full of blocks two inches square. These blocks had different colors and on each face was written a letter of the alphabet. Probably, my father had two motives in giving them to me—first, that I may have something to play with and, second, to arouse my interest in the rudiments of learning, particularly the alphabet.

"Actually while I played with the blocks, I did learn the alphabet and eventually joined the letters to form words. Very beautiful beginning, but when I was to be introduced to formal schooling on the *cartilla alfabetica* in the school of Sotera Aguinaldo, my grandmother, instead of attending to my studies, I spent my time playing the common games of the times such as: *kalahuyo, sopo, calderon, baticobra, piku-piko, San Anton,* and *tubigan*. Aside from these games I enjoyed playing with toy guns."

I'm old enough to be the father of my college-level students, and yet Aguinaldo's childhood games are Greek to me, except *piko*. Nowadays, many children play indoors on a computer, and there is little physical exertion except for the eyes and fingertips. To them, Aguinaldo's games are Jurassic indeed.

Like Rizal, the young Aguinaldo was sent to a private school in town and he seemed to have used the same books Rizal used like "Doctrina Cristiana" and "Amigo de los Niños," yet the result was not the same. Rizal turned out better maybe because he was beaten daily, while Aguinaldo was spared even if he didn't study, probably because the teacher did not want to court the ire of Aguinaldo's mother and grandmother. Aguinaldo wrote:

"Up to the time of my father's death, I continued to have a dislike for studies. Furthermore, I was discouraged to discover that those who were highly educated were either sent to the gallows or deported."

Despite all this, Aguinaldo was still sent to a private high school where he failed his exams. Yet he managed to enroll in the Dominican-run Colegio de San Juan de Letran in Intramuros, where he did not stay long, and was moved to another private school run by a certain Cipriano Fenoy Gonzales in Santa Cruz before ending up in the school of Jose Ma. Basa in Cavite.

In Manila, Aguinaldo spent a lot of time watching the ships anchored on Magallanes Street. His favorite subject was geography. He ignored all the other subjects.

Perhaps the problem was not with Aguinaldo but with the teachers who did not know how to motivate him to study. Nevertheless, he rose to become president of the First Republic and surrounded himself with the learned.

Now look where that led him and us?

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

'Yari'

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

"WALANG MANGYAYARI (NOTHING WILL HAPPEN)," JUN argued. He was shrugging off the possibility that he would get Lizette, his live-in girlfriend, pregnant. (I'm not using their real names.)

Times are hard, he acknowledged, and he and his girlfriend can barely make ends meet. She works as a waitress while he picks up casual jobs here and there. They pay P3,500 a month, almost half of their combined income, for a 4-sq m room in one of Quezon City's slum colonies, where I've been conducting research.

He's 24, married but separated. She's 21 and agreed to live in with him a month after they met. He's had a string of live-in partners and says he fell in love with Lizette because she was "decent," unlike his previous girlfriends, and yet willing to live in with him.

Both of them agreed a baby was out of the question and yet they were not using any reliable family planning method. When he first told me "*walang mangyayari*," it was said in a boastful tone. Occasionally, he'd use withdrawal and he was sure this was effective because of his prowess with "timing." When I explained that a pregnancy could still occur even with small amounts of ejaculate, he looked incredulous.

The next time we talked, he was still adamant that nothing would happen, but was clearly less confident. He rambled about how he had an hernia operation three years ago and that had probably made him sterile, comparing the operation to a vasectomy. When I explained how different the two operations were, he shrugged: "It's all the same. When they operate you there, it weakens your sperm. Look, none of my other live-in partners got pregnant."

"How sure are you?" I threw the question back at him, and he seemed almost titillated by the idea that he might have sired children—and escaped. "*Problema nila 'yan* (It's their problem)," he said, referring to his former girlfriends.

He said he and Lizette monitor her menstrual cycle, but when I asked him when a woman was fertile during her menstrual cycle, he mumbled something about five days before and after—a common and dangerous misconception.

Each time I ask him what he would do if something does happen, he shoots back, "*Di, ipalaglag.*" He says Lizette has agreed as well to an abortion, if something happens.

PMS

This year, of the 2.4 million pregnancies that will occur in the Philippines, more than half will be unplanned and unwanted, many occurring in circumstances similar to what I have just described.

One of my anthropology students, a Catholic nun, is finishing her dissertation with "May Nangyari Na" (Something's Happened) as the title, describing the lives of young women, no, girls, who get pregnant before marriage.

Don't imagine "liberated" girls in Metro Manila who sleep around, those women are usually smart enough to protect themselves. We're talking here about girls from very impoverished families, who fall in love with boys as poor as they are but who are able to seduce their girlfriends with promises of a better life. Many will describe how almost accidental the sex was, sometimes only occurring once but leading to a pregnancy.

When something happens, an abortion is one option, often suggested by the girl's own mother, who knows what pregnancy will mean for their family. Others, again often parents deciding for their children, will march the young lovers to church, or to a judge, for a quick wedding. The baby is born, and is soon followed by another one. They come in succession, but no one's concerned about these pregnancies because they occur within marriage.

Like Jun and Lizette, almost all of the girls interviewed by my student got little or no information about sex from their parents, except of course for the usual warnings about premarital sex and the shame that a pregnancy would cause.

We're fixated over premarital sex as the problem, even coining the abbreviation PMS to describe it. But we do little to talk about sex, about learning to be more discerning with relationships. All we do is tell our young that PMS is wrong. We also tell them sex should always be accompanied by love. So when two young people fall in love, they figure yes, PMS is "wrong," but maybe they're in love and that love makes the sex "less wrong."

Homes are silent about sex. And so are the schools. When the Department of Education came out recently with modules for students in public high schools teaching them about family planning and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, the "pro-life" groups protested, claiming this will just encourage the young to have sex. Conservatives threatened to file charges against the education secretary, through the Office of the Ombudsman. The secretary has since suspended the distribution of the modules.

What about the health centers? When I asked Jun why he and Lizette couldn't at least get some advice from these centers, he said it was shameful (*nakakahiya*) since they were not married.

Power and 'yari'

"*Walang mangyayari.*" "*May nangyari na.*" The two phrases have haunted me the last few weeks because of the interviews with Jun, and because of my student's dissertation. "*Yari*" is the root word here, related to "*ari*," one's possession. "*Yari*" is also the root for "*kapangyarihan*" or power. Power is so closely tied to control or possession of something or someone, which allows a person to make things happen (or, if we are to believe Jun, to make things not happen).

It's not surprising "*yari*" has sexual meanings as well: it can also mean to "have sex." And "*ari*," well, can refer to the genitals. "*Yari ka!*" is also used in a way similar to the English "You're screwed," meaning you're in deep trouble now. "*Yari ka*" can be a warning, or a threat, coming from someone powerful. And the one on the receiving end will sometimes respond, in despair, "*Yari ako.*"

Ideally, two people involved in a sexual relationship should be equally empowered, but in the real world, many relationships are skewed, with one partner much more powerful than the other. But the worst cases are those we find with our young people, where both parties are disempowered. Sure, Jun reeks of machismo, but his boasting about being able to control himself is empty, and betrays powerlessness. Perversely, it is this powerless boasting, "*Walang mangyayari*," that eventually leads to a pregnancy, which is then described as "*may nangyari na.*"

The "pro-life" groups claim that the DepEd modules on sex will encourage young people to have sex, and that the materials don't have enough warnings about the dangers of contraception. The conservatives seem to underestimate themselves. Like many other young people, Jun and Lizette have heard the myths being spread by these moralists about pills causing cancer, about condoms having holes. Jun even echoes something he heard during a priest's homily: "You shouldn't use condoms with people you love."

Yari tayo.

LETTERS

This GMA 'dagdag' is welcome

THERE IS TALK GOING AROUND the "culture and arts community" that the conferment of the National Artist Award on Abdulmari Asia Imao was "another *dagdag*" of President Macapagal-Arroyo. It is said that in the short list that the joint board of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and the Cultural Center of the Philippines submitted to the President for approval, proclamation and confirmation, Imao's name was not included.

I almost believed in this lie. But come to think of it, doesn't Imao deserve the award? I myself did some research on him for an answer to this question.

Imao's name was not included in the list because he was bypassed from the beginning. After all, he is a Muslim and no Muslim sits in the joint board. Clearly, it was another case of discrimination against our Muslim brothers and cultural minorities.

I also found out that since its establishment in 1972, or 34 years ago, the National Artist Award has not been given to a Muslim. Imao is the first Muslim to be given the honor, which is the the fourth highest recognition given by the state by virtue of EO 236 or the Honors Code of the Philippines.

The NCCA executive director was right in explaining on TV that the selection process of the National Artist Award is not the exclusive province of the NCCA and the CCP, which serve merely as secretariat for the Award; and it is still the President's prerogative to affirm, proclaim and confer the award on behalf of the state.

The NCCA has "Dangal ng Haraya" and "Alab ng Haraya" and the CCP has its "Gawad CCP para sa Sining"—these awards are free from the President's intervention. But the National Artist Award is a different case. It is a state award and the President has the full legal right to choose whom she wants to give the award to.

Did President Arroyo err in naming Imao National Artist for Sculpture? No. Imao rightfully deserves the recognition for his works, which placed Muslim art in the national, mainstream consciousness and strengthened the cultural bond among the tri-people communities of Muslims, Christians and lumads.

Imao's life is a living legacy. He gave us the *sarimanok*, not just to promote and enhance *ukkil* of the Tausugs and Maranaos, but also to show us how to live a simple and modest existence amid fame and glory.

I, therefore, would like to congratulate President Arroyo for letting us Christians share—through Imao, the beauty and grandeur of the cultural heritage—that Muslim Mindanao offers.

—ALLAN GARCIA,
allangarcia_sampaloc@yahoo.com

Who's tainting what with politics?

GREATNESS CANNOT be legislated. Politics never had, never has and never will have the monopoly of power, truth and that rare attribute called wisdom.

Susan Roces' decision not to send anyone to receive the National Artist Award for her husband, the late Fernando Poe Jr. was not a mere political move, as implied by Mike Defensor and independent movie producer Kidlat Tahimik.

Susan's decision was a statement. It expressed her feelings and conviction. As a widow of FPJ, speaking from her heart, the decision was made neither according to the scheming minds of political advisers nor with the emotions of the hurting fans and supporters of her late husband.

She was the one closest to him. She knew his mind and heart better than anyone else. Let her say what she thinks and feels about FPJ. Whatever she says, no one should question and diminish its value for it comes from someone whose love and devotion to FPJ cannot be questioned.

Defensor was quoted as saying: "I think she (President Macapagal-Arroyo) is sad because this had been tainted with politics." That was yet another feat of political acrobatics. Who is tainting what with politics? No, GMA felt sad because, like all eager and impatient politicians, she did not get what she wanted.

Two words caught my attention in Susan's statement: "diminish" and "trivialize." First, she said: "[T]he Poe family does not wish to diminish the value of the award by accepting it from Ms Arroyo. I cannot in all conscience go through the motions of the awarding ceremonies just for public display." Second, she said: "The Gawad Pambansang Alagad ng Sining is too important and prestigious to be trivialized, and I feel that would be doing my husband and those who believe in him a grave dishonor."

Who are the people at the helm of the NCCA and the CCP? How did they get there? Who chooses the jurors for selecting national artists? What hand does the President have in the selection?

Soon the death penalty will be abolished—again. The Catholic bishops are happy. GMA is happy that they are happy. If Susan is not happy about the National Artist Award posthumously given to her husband, GMA is not happy, too. But Susan's unhappiness cannot be manipulated. In her own words her feelings and convictions cannot be diminished nor trivialized.

If FPJ is great, let his fans, the masses, his family and friends decide that.

Politics in our country, and anywhere else for that matter, presumes too much. Politicians even think that they can define greatness.

—FR. ROBERTO P. REYES

Word of thanks from Tamano family

OUR SINCEREST AND DEEPEST GRATITUDE to the INQUIRER for reporting the murder of our beloved Capt. Sadat Hofer Tamano and Pvt. Nabral Barra (PDI, 5/20/06) and supporting our family in our arduous quest for justice.

We filed our complaint five months ago, on Jan. 13, 2006, to be exact. After two months of preliminary investigation, our family eagerly awaited the resolution of Cagayan de Oro City's prosecutor and the filing of the information with the regional trial court, as well as the speedy issuance of the warrants of arrest against the suspects.

—SHAHLIMAR HOFER TAMANO,
director, Office of Special Concerns,
Department of Tourism, Manila

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ABANGAN SA JULY 29!
ABC
Iba Tayo!

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TV GUIDE

Wednesday, June 21, 2006

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5				National Geographic	PBA				Sentro	PBA					Big News	The Best Of American Idol			
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy	Mr Bean	Naruto	Calla Lily	TV Patrol World		Kapamilya Deal Or No Deal	Bituing Walang Ningning	Sa Piling Mo	My Girl	Wonderful Life	S.O.C.O.			Insider
AXN		CSI: NY (Season 2)		The World's Most Extreme Places		Worlds Apart		Beastmaster (Season I)		Andromeda (Season V)		30 Seconds To Fame	Samsung Sports World	Maximum Exposure (Season 1)		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 6)		CSI: Miami (Season II)	
Cartoon Network	Police Academy	Richie Rich	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy: Double Episodes		The Simpsons - Double Episodes		Power Rangers Ninja Storm	PokeMon	Dico	Gundam Seed Destiny	The Simpsons		Mucha Lucha!	Duck Dodgers	Justice League	Samurai Jack
Cinema One		Colegiala				Calvento Files				Kahit Kailan			Persona	Ika-13 Kapitulo (9:15 PM)				Mr Suave	
Cinemax	Guarding Tess (2:40 PM)			The World Of Suzie Wong				Night Falls On Manhattan				Wyatt Earp						The Specialist (11:05PM)	
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	World News Asia	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense		Cold Case		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	I, Detective	Law & Order		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Wasabi				Bones	
Discovery Channel		Unsolved History		American Chopper		Superweapons Of The Ancient World		Dangerman: Adventures With Geoff Mackley		Wild Discovery		Hour China		The Greatest Ever		I Survived		Ten Ways	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/[illegible]	Sabrina, The Animated Series	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			American Dragon	Buzz on Maggie	Kim Possible	Totally Spies	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN	Dubai X Games - Day 2	15th Sultan Azlan Shah Cup			15th Sultan Azlan Shah Cup Highlights	2006 NBA Finals, Dallas vs Miami					SportsCenter Germany	Germany Tonight	Dubai X Games - Day 2	2006 LPGA Pro Tour Champs		SportsCenter Asia	2006 NBA Finals, Dallas vs Miami		
ETC		America's Next Top Model 4		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Veronica Mars 2		Beach Girls		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Starting Over		The Maury Povich Show		The Jerry Springer Show		Dr. Phil		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition	The Ellen Show		Wheel Of Fortune	Jeopardy	Cold Turkey		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition
EWTN	St. Thomas More: Patron Statesman	Chaplet Of Mercy/ Angelus	Faith In Motion	Truth In The Heart	Rosary With Mother Angelica	EWTN Gallery	Suffering And The Love Of God	EWTN Catholic Classic	The Church & The Poor: Building Bridges	Mother Angelica Live Classics		Daily Mass Live		Holy Land Rosary/ Angelus	One In Their Hands: Holiness Of Priesthood	Parable	Rome Reports	Special Programming	
Fox News		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live					
GMA 7	Agawin Mo Man Ang Lahat (2:45 PM)	Now and Forever (3:15 PM)	Endless Love 1: Autumn In My Heart By Popular Demand		Saiyuki	Dragonball Z	Gokusen	24 Oras		Captain Barbell	Majika	I Luv NY	Love Of The Condor Heroes	Jewel In The Palace		Nuts Entertainment			Saksi
Hallmark Channel		McLeod's Daughters V		Little John (4:05 PM)				Bewitched	The Nanny	Judging Amy		Doc Martin		Judging Amy		Within These Walls			Judging Amy (11:45PM)
HBO				Double Dare			The Perfect Husband: Laci Peterson Story			Van Helsing (6:50 PM)				The Road Warrior			White Chicks (10:30PM)		
Hero TV	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate Japan	Mr Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Super Gals	Angelic Layer	Tokyo Underground	Metal Fighter Miku	Beyblade G-Revolution	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Naruto	Mirmo de Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate Japan	Mr Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Super Gals	Angelic Layer
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	TV Informercial		Japan Video Topics Asia		ME TV		Travel Philippines	BYK 101	Up Close And Personal	IBC News Tonite	Breaking Barriers	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show David Letterman		[illegible]		Velocity		X-Men	Street Smarts	Mad TV		That 70s Show	My Name Is Earl	The Late Show David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Premium Blend	Primetime Glick	Chappelle Show
Lifestyle Network		30 Minute Meals	Wolfgang Puck	Sweet Dreams	Smart Solutions	Sensible Chic	Decorating Cents	Iron Chef America		My Country, My Kitchen	E! Entertainment Special		Living Space	Martha		Fine Living Special		Intimate Portrait	
MTV Philippines		Laguna Beach		MTV Screen	MTV Hits (with SMS)					Get Spotted	Get Hitch'd	MTV Screen	MTV Ask. Pink	TRL		Laguna Beach		MTV Live Sandwich	
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYXLOG	MYX Finds	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		MYX Live!		Urban MYX	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXLOG
National Geographic	Wildlife Diary	National Geographic Specials		Journey Into Amazonia		Totally Wild Polar Bear Mom & Cubs	Planet Wild	Top 5 - World Cup Clash	Top 5 - Amazing Moments	WOW! Wild Sex Femmes Fatales		About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Seconds From Disaster: Hotel Collapse Singapore		Is It Real? Crop Circles	
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports [illegible]	[illegible]	Teledyaryo W/ [illegible]		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo Final Edition				Bantay OCW With Susan K.			
Nickelodeon	ChalkZone	Hey Arnold!	SpongeBob SquarePants	Rocket Power	Four Eyes	SpongeBob SquarePants	My Life As A Teenage Robot	Nick Kicks		The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Unfabulous	Romeo	Naturally Sadie	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			The Onyok Velasco Story				Ang Pagano				Kung Kasalanan Man								Takaw Tingin
Qtv	Bow Lang Ang [illegible]		[illegible]	Kaleido Star	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Magic Ring	Irene	Noel	Project 11	Now Na!		[illegible] News On Q	Balikbayan		Irene	Over The Green Fields
RPN 9						Global Window	RPN Aksyon News	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	NBA Semis/ Conf Finals		Oras Ng Himala				Newswatch Now	Cargo For Truth		Kerygma
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Muvee TV Shopping		Sony Music Video Bagupaan				Oras ng [illegible]		SBN Music Video			
Solar Sports					Volleyball 2006 [illegible] Masters Finals						2006 NBA Finals, [illegible]						Solar Sports Desk	World Tennis [illegible]	
Sports Plus				FIFA World Cup '06: Costa Rica vs Poland						NASCAR [illegible] 400 Michigan								World Game	
Star Movies	[illegible] Effect (2:35 PM)			[illegible]			D3: The Mighty Ducks				The Clearing (7:25 PM)			Marked For Death			The Man With Golden Gun		
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Ed		The Simpsons	[illegible] In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	Beauty & The Geek		Beauty & Geek/ Boston Legal		The Apprentice		Seinfeld	Beauty & The Geek
Studio 23	Bewitched	YuGi-Oh 3 & 4				Batman Beyond	Xiaolin Showdown	Spirits	Pinoy Big Brother	Wazzup Wazzup	World's Craziest Videos		CSI (8:30 PM)	24 Season 4 (9:10 PM)		News Central	Oprah		Just Shoot Me

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

PNP wants direct role in war vs NPA

By Luige A. del Puerto

POLICE ARE PRESSING FOR A BIGGER piece of the action against the insurgents now that the government is stepping up its campaign to defeat the communist rebellion.

Officials recommended to Ms Arroyo that the Philippine National Police adopt a "paradigm shift" in favor of a more direct role in internal security operations, a police spokesperson said.

Search and destroy

This means the police also want to conduct search and destroy operations, just like the military.

"We have recommended to the President a paradigm shift, from a mere support role to the Armed Forces to a direct and active role," said Senior Supt. Samuel Pagdilao.

"If that happens, we will be out at the forefront in these internal security operations," he said.

But the bulk of police forces shall remain focused on law enforcement, Pagdilao said.

Mobile groups

Only elite combat units, such as the regional and provincial mobile groups and the Special Action Force, will be sent out to aggressively search for rebels, he said.

Mobile groups are quick-reaction teams while the SAF is a seasoned combat group of the PNP.

Pagdilao said that instead of merely providing leads to the military about the enemy's whereabouts, or taking up purely defensive positions, "this time we want to play a more active role."

VP IN CANADA

Vice President and concurrent housing development chair Noli de Castro is welcomed by Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper shortly before the opening of the Third World Urban Forum in Vancouver, Canada. The Vice President delivered a message Tuesday during the opening of WUF 3 highlighting the progress of the UN-Habitat supported campaigns on "secure tenure and good urban governance." Some 150 delegates from the Philippines attended the WUF, including Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, Rep. Ed Zialcita, city mayors and members of civil society. *(Story on Page A10)*

Gov't troops going full blast vs NPAs

From page A1

prominent civilians. He said such a job fell on the Philippine National Police and not on the military.

Cruz would neither confirm nor deny leftist claims that the military had drawn up an "order of battle" of militant leaders, or a list of so-called enemy personalities.

The defense secretary repeatedly sidestepped questions about it, saying instead that he had stressed to military commanders the importance of building up legal cases against suspected communist leaders so they could be arrested.

Palparan, chief of the Army's 7th Infantry Division, said he took the "every-town-every-city" approach in Ms Arroyo's home region of Central Luzon after she shortened the deadline for wiping out the communist rebels from 10 years to two years.

By spreading out his division's more than 5,000 soldiers and 3,000 members of the Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Units, Palparan said he hoped to counter the rebels' two-pronged strategy of stepping up their propaganda and using threats against civilians.

"We want to help restore the confidence of the people in government," Palparan told the INQUIRER by phone. "We also like to tell the people we are good soldiers. We are not *loko-loko* (crazy) and *gago* (abusive)."

Palparan, who retires on Sept. 11, said the military would launch combat operations in areas where the NPA and the breakaway Rebolusyonaryong Hukbong Bayan were operating. In other areas, soldiers will carry out civic action projects.

"They may be small in number but they control a number of big areas and people," he said, referring to the estimated 1,200 rebels in his target area.

"They do that by not only having an armed group but also having a large intelligence network and support system from the civilians."

Pleasing the US?

Bishop Iniguez said it appeared to him that Ms Arroyo, in suddenly ordering the insurgency crushed during her term, was simply trying to "impress someone, a group or a sector."

"Possibly the Americans," he said.

Bishop Ramon Villena also expressed alarm over the intensified anti-insurgency drive.

Villena, a known ally of Ms Arroyo, said the government had a right to protect itself "but I'm concerned that this aggressiveness would only result in more civilians being caught in the crossfire, and more human rights violations."

During Friday's Cabinet meeting in Isabela, where Ms Arroyo announced her intensified counterinsurgency campaign, Villena said he suggested that the government pursue peace negotiations but this was rejected by National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales.

"So right there and then, my suggestion died," Villena said.

Even the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) doubted the government could easily stamp out the communist insurgency.

Khaled Musa, MILF deputy information chief, said Ms Arroyo's marching orders would only create more problems.

"You cannot lick a movement (if you are) not capable and experienced in the art of revolution," Musa said.

Despite the criticisms, the government appeared unstoppable. In Digos City, at least 39 policemen have undergone firearm proficiency training to prepare them for a bigger role in the counterinsurgency operations, according to Senior Supt. Anselmo Simeon Pinili, Davao del Sur police chief.

Jose Ma. Sison, self-exiled founder of the Communist Party of the Philippines, mocked Malacañang's redoubled campaign against the NPA.

"By deploying the AFP and the PNP units very thinly and making them vulnerable to NPA offensives, the regime unwittingly becomes the chief transport and supply officer of the NPA," Sison said in an e-mailed statement from Utrecht, the Netherlands.

"More arms from the Pentagon can only mean more arms for the NPA to seize through ambushes, raids and arrest operations," he said.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye reiterated that the government's new offensive against the NPA was not only about the deployment of troops to fight the armed enemy "but also about the deployment of resources to spur jobs, livelihood and community services." *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, TJ Burgonio, Leila B. Salaverria, Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau; Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; Jeoffrey Maitem and Eldie S. Aguirre, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Another militant killed in Negros Oriental

From page A1

Muna, referring to the extra funds which President Macapagal-Arroyo's had ordered released to finance her anti-insurgency campaign.

He said the increased funding had emboldened alleged military "death squads." Military officials could not be immediately reached for comment.

Region 8 police director Chief Supt. Silverio Alarcio confirmed the killing of Dasi-an, whom he described as a rebel returnee.

The Kidapawan victims were George Vigo and his wife Mazel, both broadcast journalists, who were killed on Monday.

The Vigos were on their way home on their motorbike from Carmen town in North Cotabato where they were ambushed at around 5:15 p.m. near Apo Sandawa Home Phase II, a housing project in Kidapawan.

An INQUIRER tabulation showed 105 newspersons have been killed since 1986 when the dictator Ferdinand Marcos was ousted.

The couple sustained multiple gunshot wounds in the head and body, according to Supt. Danny Reyes, city police chief. Reyes said the triggerman had on a white T-shirt and a towel was wrapped around his head and face. The driver of the Honda XL100 motorcycle wore a black jacket and helmet.

The Vigos hosted two popular weekly radio programs—"Voice of the Youth" and "Affairs in Congress"—over dxND radio here.

George Vigo also was a contributor to the Union of Catholic Asian News Agency. In addition, he was project officer of Community and Family Services International, an NGO based in Cotabato City. CSFI has a youth development project in Carmen.

Vigo's wife belonged to the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, a leftwing organization whose members have also come under attack. She was also the liaison officer of North Cotabato Rep. Lala Talinio-Santos.

Killings denounced

International media groups have described the Philippines as the second most dangerous place for journalists to work after war-torn Iraq.

The National Union of Journalist in the Philippines (NUJP) condemned the killings.

"We are alarmed," NUJP director Jose Torres said in a statement. "Many killings of journalists and political activists remain unsolved despite the promise of the government to immediately address the issue. We are hoping there will be immediate results of authorities' investigations."

The Paris-based Reporters Without Borders also expressed indignation at the killings. "We call on the police to deploy all the necessary resources to identify and punish those responsible for these murders. We also urge the authorities to give journalists better protection," it said in a statement.

Jun Alabe, Mazel's brother, said the couple's being broadcasters could have made them targets, as they were critical of the Arroyo administration.

Reyes said George had informed his close friends that he had received death threats.

"It's too difficult to speculate who's responsible and what's the motive. Right now, we requested cartographers from Davao City to help us in the investigation," Reyes said.

"Justice will be served," vowed North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Piñol, who was a distant relative of Vigo's wife. *With reports from Charlie C. Senase, Jeoffrey Maitem and Michael Sarcauga, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Marines' No. 3 resigns, cites political pressure

From page A1

In his resignation letter, copies of which had circulated in the media, De Leon lamented the loss of values in the military service, addressing his superiors and fellow officers.

"It is with deep regret that I have to tender a resignation rather than to sign a relinquishment order... I deemed it more befitting to resign in a situation (where) truth is buried under a blurred and vague interpretation of the significant events in the history of our beloved Marine Corps," he said.

Addressing Allaga, De Leon said: "I know that the political pressure (has) now become more unbearable for the Corps and your leadership."

He said "technicalities and politics, hearsays and unfounded allegations" have dominated the Armed Forces, adding "many officers (would) rather suppress the truth just to push some personal agenda."

"Survival, according to the most respected (Flag) Officer-in-Command (Vice Admiral Mateo Mayuga), is now the rule that governs the behavior of almost everybody in the AFP. I'm sorry, sir, but please don't count me in," De Leon went on.

A spokesperson for the Marines, however, said that De Leon was sacked by Marine commandant Maj. Gen. Nelson Allaga. No reason was given.

"His relief cannot be questioned. That is the prerogative of the commander ... That's normal. It's part of the cycle (of reassignment) among officers," Lt. Col. Ariel Caculitan said.

Caculitan said De Leon had been temporarily replaced by Lt. Col. Armando Bañez.

The turnover ceremonies, which were not announced to the media, took place at Marine headquarters in Fort Bonifacio on June 15.

The last time a ranking Marine official was fired, the close-knit Marines mounted an uprising.

February standoff

The sudden relief of then commandant Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda on Feb. 26, on the heels of a failed opposition attempt to get the military to withdraw support from President Macapagal-Arroyo, had triggered a 10-hour standoff led by Marine Col. Ariel Querubin.

De Leon was one of those investigated for the incident. According to insiders who spoke on condition of anonymity, De Leon felt that he had been treated unfairly.

"The standoff happened four months ago. He had no connection with that. As far as I know he was not an object of the investigation," Caculitan claimed.

"So far we're OK," he added, when asked about the corps' morale.

De Leon's resignation letter found its way to the media. Copies were reportedly distributed at the Manila Polo Club Monday during a forum on the second impeachment complaint to be filed against Ms Arroyo.

De Leon could not be reached through his cellular phone yesterday. Caculitan would neither confirm nor deny the resignation letter, which De Leon reportedly read during the turnover ceremonies.

Probes unfinished

After nearly four months, the investigation conducted by AFP Inspector General Vice Admiral Rufino Lopez of the Feb. 24 failed coup plot as well as of the Feb. 26 Marine standoff remained unfinished.

Days after the standoff and Querubin's relief, reports circulated that other Marine officers had resigned en masse. Mayuga denied the reports but said that if any officer wanted to resign, he would not stop them.

"That's better so only those who would be left would be 'The Few, The Proud, the Marines'," he said, reiterating the Marine Corps motto.

As Marine chief of staff, De Leon managed the corps' affairs and personnel.

According to insiders, De Leon refused to accept a Military Merit Medal awarded to him by Allaga in recognition of his service.

Fire guts Marine armory

Also yesterday, a fire gutted a Marine armory at Camp Ranao in Marawi City, igniting mortar and small arms ammunition and destroying two trucks but causing no injuries, Brig. Gen. Ben Dolorfino said.

The fire started from a leaking acetylene gas tank in the motor pool and spread quickly. Dolorfino said an investigation was under way.

NOTICE

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Ceasefire proposed around Bulusan

By Jim Gomez, *AP*

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS YESTERDAY SOUGHT a temporary ceasefire with communist guerrillas to allow troops to help villagers if a major volcanic eruption occurs.

Army troops have been deployed to towns near the Mt. Bulusan volcano in Sorsogon province and helped evacuate hundreds of villagers after it belched ash and small rocks Sunday, blanketing several villages with ash and posing health risks, officials said.

Communist guerrillas are active in Sorsogon, about 390 kilometers southeast of Manila, and recently attacked troops near Bulusan.

Despite a new all-out offensive against the New People's Army rebels ordered by President Macapagal-Arroyo, her chief of staff, Mike Defensor, said the government was ready to discuss possible cooperation with the guerrillas in the Bulusan area.

"The Armed Forces of the Philippines is suggesting whether a ceasefire could be adopted at this time amid our efforts to evacuate and protect our people who could be affected by an eruption of Mt. Bulusan," Defensor told reporters.

"We're showing here again that we can work to have peace or work to forge cooperation" with the rebels, Defensor said.

Local officials involved in preparations for a possible eruption back a temporary ceasefire.

"There is a need now for people to get together to help out. We don't need any fighting at this time. We have evacuated people and they really need help," said Noel Pura, a disaster response official.

More than 700 people were staying in two elementary schools in the farming towns of Casiguran and Juban after being evacuated Sunday. Residents had asked to be moved from their ash-hit villages because of health concerns, Pura said.

"We really need to have peace. I hope no other problem would arise aside from what we're facing now. The people here are simply in a very difficult situation," Casiguran Mayor Edwin Hamor said.

Bulusan's ash explosion was its eighth since it started acting up in March.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said a major eruption was not likely soon but warned that surrounding villages could be hit by volcanic mud flows if rain washes down ash deposits.

Arroyo inspected Casiguran and other towns over the weekend and ordered officials to ensure that villagers stay away from dangerous areas.

The Philippines, with about 22 active volcanos, is along the Pacific "Ring of Fire," where volcanic activity and earthquakes are common.

A BINOCULAR that a boy uses to take a closer look at Bulusan Volcano draws the interest of his playmates in Irosin town. Many residents of communities near the volcano have been evacuated although the Phivolcs said there was no immediate danger of a major eruption. NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Phivolcs misses key earthquake data as instrument stolen

SORSOGON CITY—THE PHILIPPINE Institute of Volcanology and Seismology had missed some data important for forecasting when one of its seismic instruments planted on the upper slope of Mt. Bulusan was stolen in August last year, according to a specialist of the agency yesterday.

Eduardo P. Laguardia, Bicol volcano monitoring coordinator, said yesterday that the stolen seismic instrument might have made a difference because it records localized tremors near the crater that could not be detected in other parts of the volcano.

He said the data from the stolen gadget could make forecasting more accurate before Bulusan spewed ash on March 21.

Laguardia said they had to employ alternative means to fill in the data gap with the absence of the stolen gadget by supplementing the data taken from the seismic instrument with geochemistry like gas measurement to come up with more accurate forecasting.

The Philippine Air Force (PAF) said evacuation was urgent.

"It's important that the residents heed the government's advice to evacuate. Conducting an aerial rescue mission if there's an ash fall would be extremely difficult and risky," Maj. Augusto dela Pena, PAF spokesperson, told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

De la Pena said that an Air Force rescue should be the "last resort" in case a major eruption takes place.

"If there would be any rescue missions, it would be for isolated cases already," De la Pena said.

Army troopers have helped evacuate some 450 residents after Mt. Bulusan spewed ash and gravel over the weekend.

PHIVOLCS workers and Sorsogon residents install an earthquake detector device in a village in Irosin, Sorsogon in anticipation of more quakes as a result of the restiveness of Bulusan Volcano. NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Another 100 villagers living near the slopes of the volcano have evacuated to a nearby high school but most of the men stayed behind to guard their homes, Mayor Edwin Hamor of nearby Casiguran town had said.

On Monday, authorities estimated more than 20,000 people face evacuation in case of a major eruption, and set out plans for erecting tent cities outside a 6-km radius of the volcano.

De la Pena said that two Air Force UH-1H Huey helicopters have been placed on standby in Legazpi City since last week.

The Air Force has also flown scientists from the Phivolcs for aerial surveys of Bulusan last Monday, the PAF spokesperson added. *Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Sorsogon folk driven to safety, but anxiety grows

SORSOGON CITY—THE UNCERTAINTY over when Bulusan Volcano would erupt has driven residents in communities near the danger zone to the safety of evacuation centers where their anxiety grows as the waiting game for the eruption goes on.

Sheila Hebres, 26, a mother of five residing in Inlagadian, Casiguran, Sorsogon, said she and most of the families in their village opted to go down and stay at the evacuation center because, she said, they felt that the situation was getting worse.

Hebres said their village, located in the southwestern portion of Bulusan, is experiencing the effects of increased volcanic activity.

"The earth's movement is getting frequent and the roaring sound is becoming louder like an airplane booming underground. We are very frightened," she said.

Hebres said most of the male residents stayed in their village to watch over pieces of property and to continue whatever work they could do.

She added that their vegetable crops were destroyed and that what they could harvest now were root crops.

But on the other side of Bulusan, the northeastern side, things seemed normal as residents there were not as fearful of the on-going volcanic activity.

Carlito Pancho, 29, a farmer, lives seven hills away from one of the craters but, he said, they felt they were not in danger.

He said his wife and a new born baby were safe in their home in the eastern slope though they also felt the tremor prior to the volcano's gas emissions. *Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Baguio hosts image from Fatima apparition

BAGUIO CITY—THE BAGUIO Cathedral hosted the replica of the blessed statue of the Virgin of Fatima from Portugal on Friday and Saturday.

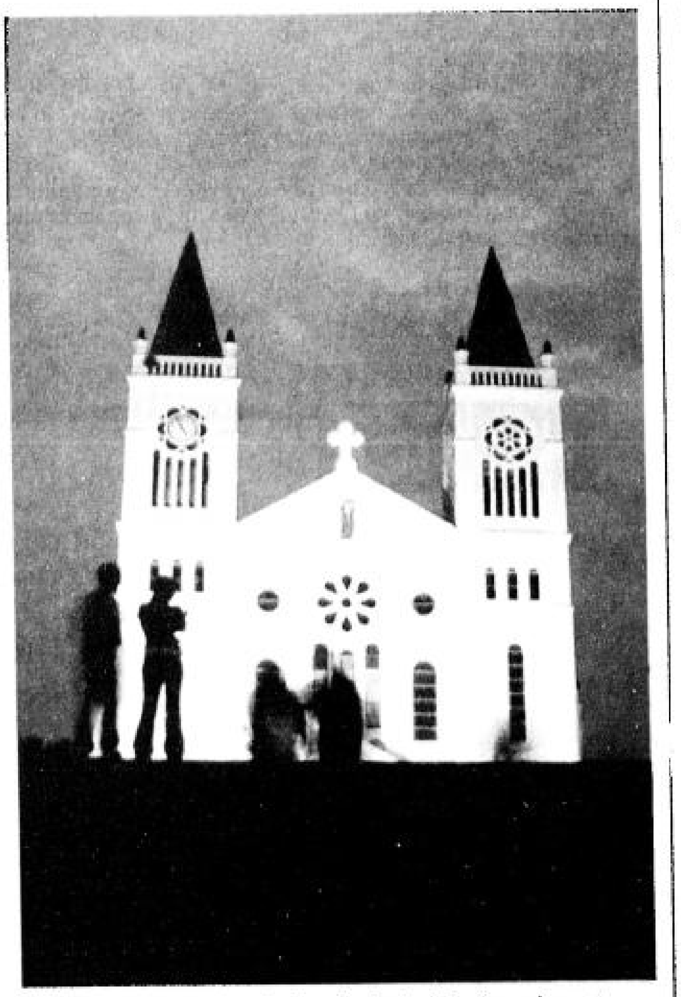
The image arrived here without much fanfare on Friday afternoon, inside a glass case that was shipped here by a truck. The Baguio Cathedral is the statue's 11th stop this year.

The statue of Fatima helps Catholics remember the messages of the Virgin Mary's apparition before three children of Fatima, Portugal in 1917, said Denver Fernandez, coordinator of the Baguio Cathedral's sacristy.

The apparition supposedly gave the children three messages divining the future of the world. The third so-called secret was made public only in 2000 by the late Pope John Paul II.

The Vatican, according to reports in 2000, said the secret was related to the failed 1981 assassination attempt against the Pope.

The Pope survived that assassination attempt. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*



THE FAITHFUL flock to the Baguio Cathedral, shown here at night, to visit and pray before the image of the Virgin of Fatima which was flown from Portugal. EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON

GMA declares half of Boracay 'alienable and disposable'

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

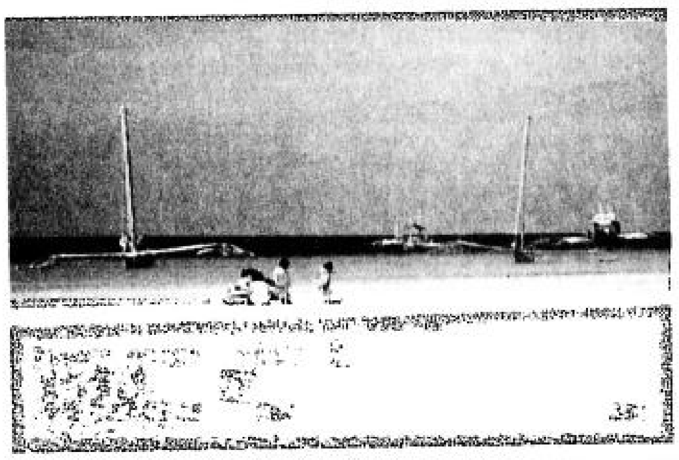
ILOILO CITY—PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO has declared more than half of Boracay Island "alienable and disposable," paving the way for the titling of prized lots on the island-resort.

The President signed Proclamation 1064 last month. It was released only last week, said Julian Amador, regional executive director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Western Visayas.

Under the proclamation, an area reaching 628 hectares or 60.85 percent of the 1,032-ha island was categorized as alienable and disposable, said Orlando Sacay, a member of the Boracay Eminent Persons Group (EPG), which is mandated to map out policies for the sustainable development of the island's tourism industry.

The remaining areas on the island are categorized as forest reserves, protected areas and swamps.

Before the issuance of the proclamation, private ownership of lots on the island was technically illegal under Proclamation 1801 issued by the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos on Nov. 10, 1978.



A TYPICAL scene on Boracay Island. PDI PHOTO

The proclamation declared Boracay and other islands and coves as tourist and marine zones and were categorized as public lands.

Landowners, operators of resorts, restaurants or hotels have no titles to lots they occupy and have only tax declarations, some as old as 30 years.

The categorization of areas on the island is aimed at resolving the intensifying ownership disputes on prized lots on Boracay as the real estate prices continue to significantly increase because of the increase in tourist arrivals.

A piece of property in the famous 5-km white beach costs from P25,000 to P30,000 per square meter.

But Sacay, also chair of the Boracay Foundation Inc. (BFI), a group of owners of resorts, hotels and restaurants on the island, said they were opposing the proclamation.

"We have to bid for our land that we have developed and invested for years," Sacay told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

"Why only now after we have spent millions of pesos in investment and development on these properties?" asked Sacay.

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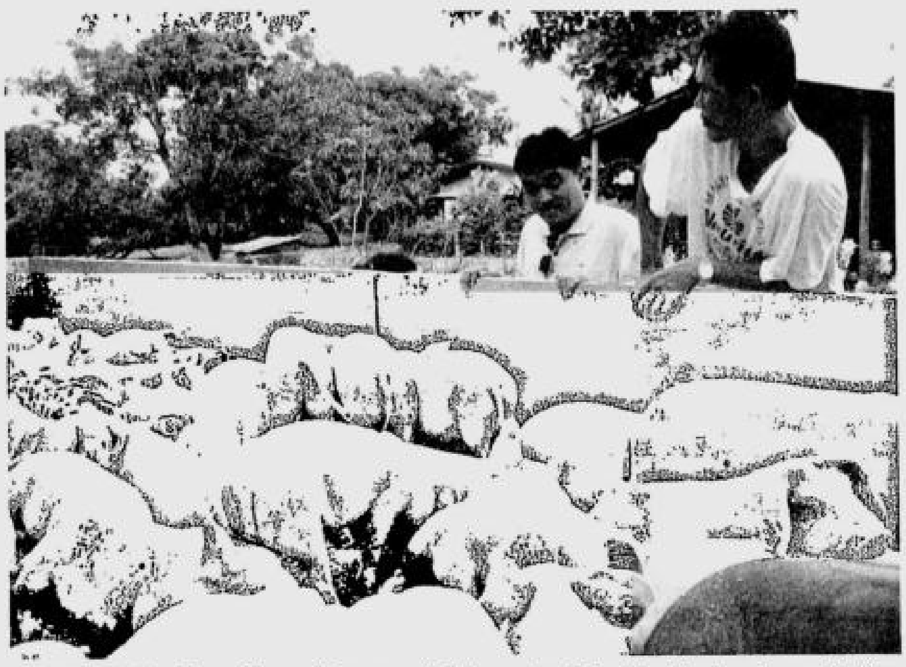
INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor **Jun Bandayrel**
Bureau Chief **Rolando B. Fernandez**

Alaminos looks up to 'Ocho-Ocho'

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
Alaminos City



ALAMINOS City Mayor Hernani Braganza (left) inspects a "Hog Together" swine production project under the "Agri-volution" program. PHOTO COURTESY OF CITY GOVERNMENT OF ALAMINOS

FARMER VERONICO BERSOLA, 53, used to gross P21,000 from a 4,000-square meter parcel of his agricultural land, an earning which, he said, was just about break even.

But when he planted the same area with "*pinakbet*" (Ilocano vegetable stew) vegetables, he grossed P118,000 or more than five times his usual earnings.

'(I)n any part of the city is a beehive of activities. In the plains, hybrid rice and corn are produced while the slopes grow high value crops'

In a hilly village in Alaminos City in Pangasinan, Arnold Taipan, in his 20s, busily tends his goats and Sasso chickens as he farms a three-hectare piece of land. In the lower part of the field, he plants hybrid rice and in the slopes, high-value crops.

Taipan used to help his father, a tenant, but he is now carving his own place in farming.

In another village, groups of fishermen are busy raising oysters and the expensive *lapu-lapu* (grouper), while others reforest coastal areas with mangroves.

Bersola, Taipan and the fishermen are a few of those who joined the "Color-coded Agri-volution" project, which the One Pangasinan Foundation and the city government have embarked on.

According to a project document, "agri-volution," which combines "agriculture" and "evolution," means the "transformation in the agricultural system technology to alleviate the economic condition of farmers and fisherfolk."

The program is also called the Bayanihan Integrated Program for Sustainable Agriculture (Bipsa). It was granted a P1-million package for training activities during the 2nd Philippines Development Innovation Marketplace for Panibagong Paraan (Innovations) by the World Bank last month.

Impact

As the term "agri-volution" suggests, the 2-year-old program has started to create an impact on the lives of the poor and already is sending ripples to the local economy, Mayor Hernani Braganza said.

The city's geologic makeup makes it difficult to implement just one livelihood program, said Braganza, founder of the One Pangasinan Foundation.

Alaminos, the home of the Hundred Islands National Park, has plains, rolling hills and the sea as territory, and these areas need different economic project designs and implementation, he said.

Agri-volution focuses on three main projects to develop crops, livestock and fishery, Braganza said. It has to be considered, too, that the people living in the coastal areas, the plains and the hills have different cultural practices, he said.

Thus, in any part of the city is a beehive of activities.

In the plains, hybrid rice and corn are produced, while high-value crops are grown in the slopes. The pasture areas belong to the livestock industry, while the coastal villages focus on aquaculture.

The city has implemented a "color-coding" scheme to identify the major industries: green for high-value commercial crops, yellow for corn, gold for rice, red for swine and goat, brown for Sasso chicken, white for dairy production, and blue for fisheries.

Annabelle Custodio-Hebron, officer in charge of the city cooperatives office, said that two years ago, the city conducted a survey to identify the priority beneficiaries of the program.

"We identified 5,000 families with a monthly income of P1,000," she said.

The program aims to increase the income of these families to at least P5,000 monthly, mainly through capital, technical and marketing assistance.

The "agri-volution" has improved agriculture and fishery systems through the "Ocho-Ocho" (8-8) project.

For rice, farms occupying an eight-hectare contiguous area are clustered and the farmers help each other during the entire cropping season.

"This way, cost of production is minimized as the farmers who are mostly tenants, do not have to hire and spend for laborers," city agriculturist Ernesto de Leon said.

Through this system, De Leon said the farmers could also share technological knowledge.

There are already 114 clusters for rice production with a total of 1,063 hectares in 30 villages, he said. These involve 775 farmers who either own the lands or are tenants.

The hybrid rice yield has increased from an average of 4.6 tons per hectare to 10.2 tons, while the harvest of traditional inbred variety has increased from three tons per hectare to six.

Each cluster is a small organization composed of a team leader, a farm technician and officers for marketing, environment and finance, De Leon said.

The city government loaned out P11 million for the "Ocho-Ocho" program for rice, and the repayment rate was 96 percent, he said.

'Pinakbet' farms

For the high-value commercial crops, the "Ocho-Ocho" scheme meant the grouping of eight farmers with a total planting area of at least 1,000 sqm. Their farms are not necessarily contiguous but must be within a village, De Leon said. There are five existing clusters for high value crops.

Every cluster must be planted with all *pinakbet* ingredients, like string beans, eggplant, *ampalaya* (bitter gourd), *kalabasa* (squash), *okra*, tomato and pepper.

Since vegetable production is labor-intensive (a hectare of land needs at least 10 laborers), jobs are created for residents.

Arceli Talania, who oversees the *pinakbet* farms for the city government, said the project aimed to diversify crops and to fill in the demand. Idle lands are also put to good use through the project, she said.

Special projects have also been lined up for families who plant *ube*, cassava, soya, *calamansi* and papaya.

"We practice clean culture to prevent multiplication of pests. The crops are properly managed in terms of weeding, pruning and thinning," De Leon said.

Farmers are also working toward "freedom" from chemical fertilizers by using wastes from the livestock industry that are processed in the city's material recovery facility (MRF) into organic fertilizers, he said.

Color revolutions

Ronald Abarra, city veterinarian, said the foundation and the city had three livestock production projects, namely: "Goat Together" (goat raising), "Alaminok" (coined from Alaminos and *manok* or chicken) and "Hog Together" (hog production).

Forty families are involved in hog fattening, 196 in chicken, and 280 in goat industries, who have to provide the housing of their livestock.

Those involved in the livestock industry are given stocks and feeds (the city also operates a feed mill), Abarra said. They are also given vaccine and medicine assistance, and help in marketing their produce.

When the city will have enough goats and native carabaos, it intends to go into dairy production, the so-called "White Revolution."

Along the coastal areas, the program has helped 84 families in oyster production, several organizations in *lapu-lapu* raising, and 68 families who were given fishing equipment. In the pipeline are mud crab production and sea culture.

But the program has not forgotten the environment as it is reforesting 24 hectares of decimated mangrove forests, Braganza said.

Before availing themselves of the projects, the residents must undergo training offered by the One Pangasinan Foundation.

There's a "shopping list" of training courses and prospective beneficiaries can select which project they want to be involved in, Braganza said.

"For the city, it's really job creation. It's a poverty reduction program and it's also a food security program," he said.

Taking the Halsema challenge

By Delmar Cariño
Atok, Benguet

A PORTION of the Halsema Road is carved from a mountain. PHOTOS BY DELMAR CARIÑO

NOTORIOUS FOR BEING RUGGED and rough, Halsema Highway, more popularly known as Mountain Trail, used to be called an "abortion road."

Today, after five years of massive rehabilitation, the highway beckons as the main gateway to the Cordillera's culture, beauty and wealth.

Gone are the days of flat tires, falling rocks and bumpy rides on the road that had made travel a misery for farmers from as far as Bontoc, Mt. Province.

The highway that peaks up to 7,400 feet above sea level along Km. 50 at Mt. Paoay in Atok, Benguet, the highest point of the Philippine highway system, has now become the region's biggest "farm-to-market road."

The Department of Tourism is cashing in on the road's new look.

"Take the Mountain Trail Challenge" has now become the DOT's line to lure local and foreign tourists to take the trail along Halsema.

"The road will now open a lot for tourism in the region. Passing through Mountain Trail would give tourists a glimpse of life and culture in the Cordillera," said Purificacion Molintas, DOT Cordillera director.

The challenge is worth indeed.

The road passes through La Trinidad, Tublay, Atok and Buguias, the country's vegetable belt.

From La Trinidad's strawberry farms, travelers will ascend from 3,000 to 7,000 feet above sea level of road along steep mountain slopes and enjoy the province's homegrown attraction—vegetable terraces.

Atok, which covers Km 21 to 60 of the Mountain Trail, will bring motorists up the mountains where fog and clouds compete with fresh air and scent of pine trees.

The highway's half tunnel is also a delight to see. First-time travelers will have the chance to see the rare Benguet Lily that grows on rocks near the road.

The National Economic and Development Authority sees the Mountain Trail's repair as a boost to the region's agriculture and mining industries.

Leon Dacanay Jr., Neda Cordillera deputy director, said the concrete road would give more life to the vegetable industry as markets would be within reach.

"The spoilage of vegetables caused by difficult road travels in the past will now be avoided," he said.

And the Department of Public Works and Highways looks at the Mountain Trail's rehabilitation as the start of the completion of a trunk line known as the South-North Transportation Backbone.

The line was envisioned to connect the Cordillera to the Manila North Road of the Ilocos region and the Daang Maharlika of Cagayan Valley.

The road's repair began in July 2001 and was completed in December 2005 under a P1-billion loan package from the World Bank.

A Korean firm, Daewoo Construction Co., handled the job under the close supervision of the BCEOM Societe Francaise d'Ingeniere, a French consultancy firm.

Now, the road is 99.56-percent complete, the government's Task Force Halsema said. It is undergoing finishing touches in time for its inauguration on July 27 by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The road starts from Baguio City and ends at Mt. Data in Bauko, Mt. Province, or a distance of 84.839 km.

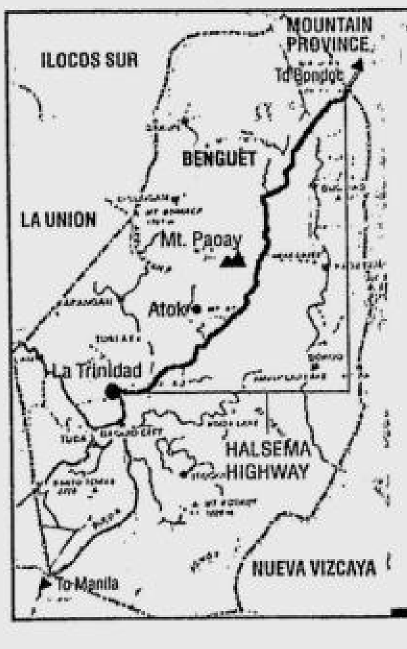
Then Benguet district engineer and Baguio Mayor Eusebius J. Halsema led the Mountain Trail's construction from 1922 to 1930. In 1953, Congress renamed it the Halsema Road, in honor of its builder.

The passage is now an all-terrain, all-weather road, said William Balajo, chief of the DPWH Cordillera construction division. Its curves and natural course demand extra precaution from drivers who need not worry when fog comes along the way as roads signs have been properly installed aside from the yellow and white lines painted in the center, he said.

"At night, reflectorized studs or cat's eyes, guide drivers as they go along," Balajo said. Drivers, however, should not exceed 60 kph when driving during the day, he said.

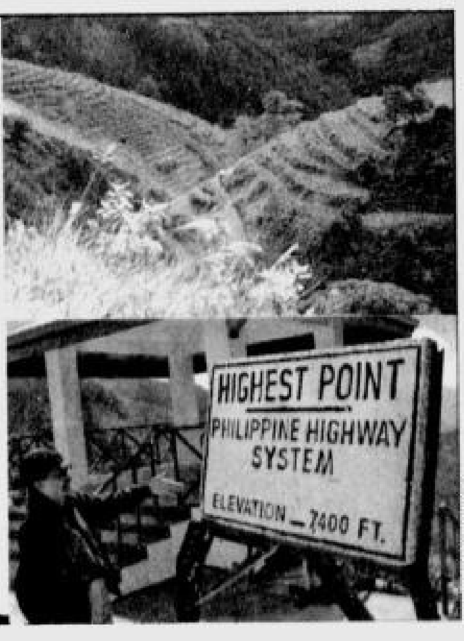
Atok Mayor Concepcion Balao said the completion of Halsema's repair would boost the local farmers' income.

"The farmers are happy. They could now easily bring their harvests to the vegetable trading post in La Trinidad," she said.



WHAT TO SEE

- Km. 50 at Mt. Paoay in Atok, Benguet, the highest point of the Philippine highway system
- Tram lines of vegetable farmers from the road down to the mountainside farms
- Vegetable terraces
- Guerrilla Saddle, along Km. 28 in Atok, Benguet, a World War II base for Filipino guerrillas
- Tombs amid vegetable gardens



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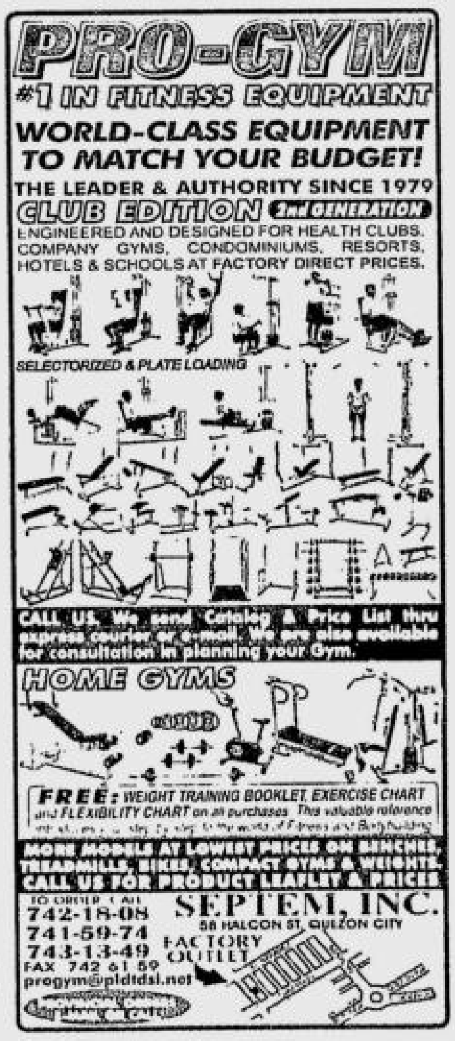

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RP a triple winner at Cannes ad fest

CANNES, FRANCE—THE PHILIPPINES WON a record three Lions at the prestigious 53rd Cannes International Advertising Festival, now going on in the south of France.

One of the Philippines' three Lions bronze trophies for an outdoor campaign went to Ogilvy Phil. for the "Volcanic Ash" poster it created for the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

The poster showed an INQUIRER van on its way to Mt. Pinatubo to cover the 1991 eruption.

Two bronzes

BBDO Guerrero Ortega won two Cannes Lions bronzes for the country for its FedEx "The Delivery" radio commercial and for its Childhope Asia poster campaign.

Oscars of ads

BBDO Guerrero Ortega last year won the first Lion for the Philippines in a mainstream category, a silver for the Consuelo Foundation/Unicef "Bunso" television commercial.

Dubbed the "Oscars of Advertising," the annual awards show and advertising festival gathers the world's advertising people for a week-long celebration of the best ads in the world.

This year, the festival, held in Cannes in the south of France, drew close to 10,000 people from 81 countries.

Pinoy juror

Only half-way through the festival, the Philippines was short-listed 18 times in seven competition categories—press, outdoor, radio, direct, promo, media and cyber.

BBDO Guerrero Ortega, whose chair and chief creative officer David Guerrero, is a Cannes Radio juror at this year's festival, took nine of the 18 finalist citations while Ogilvy & Mather took four. DM9JaymeSyfu, TBWA\Santiago Mangada Pulo, JWT, 141 Worldwide, Mediacom and Y&R had one each.

Young Lions

A record 24,863 entries were submitted this year, with 170 entries coming from the Philippines, which this year had the highest attendance at the festival with 22 delegates.

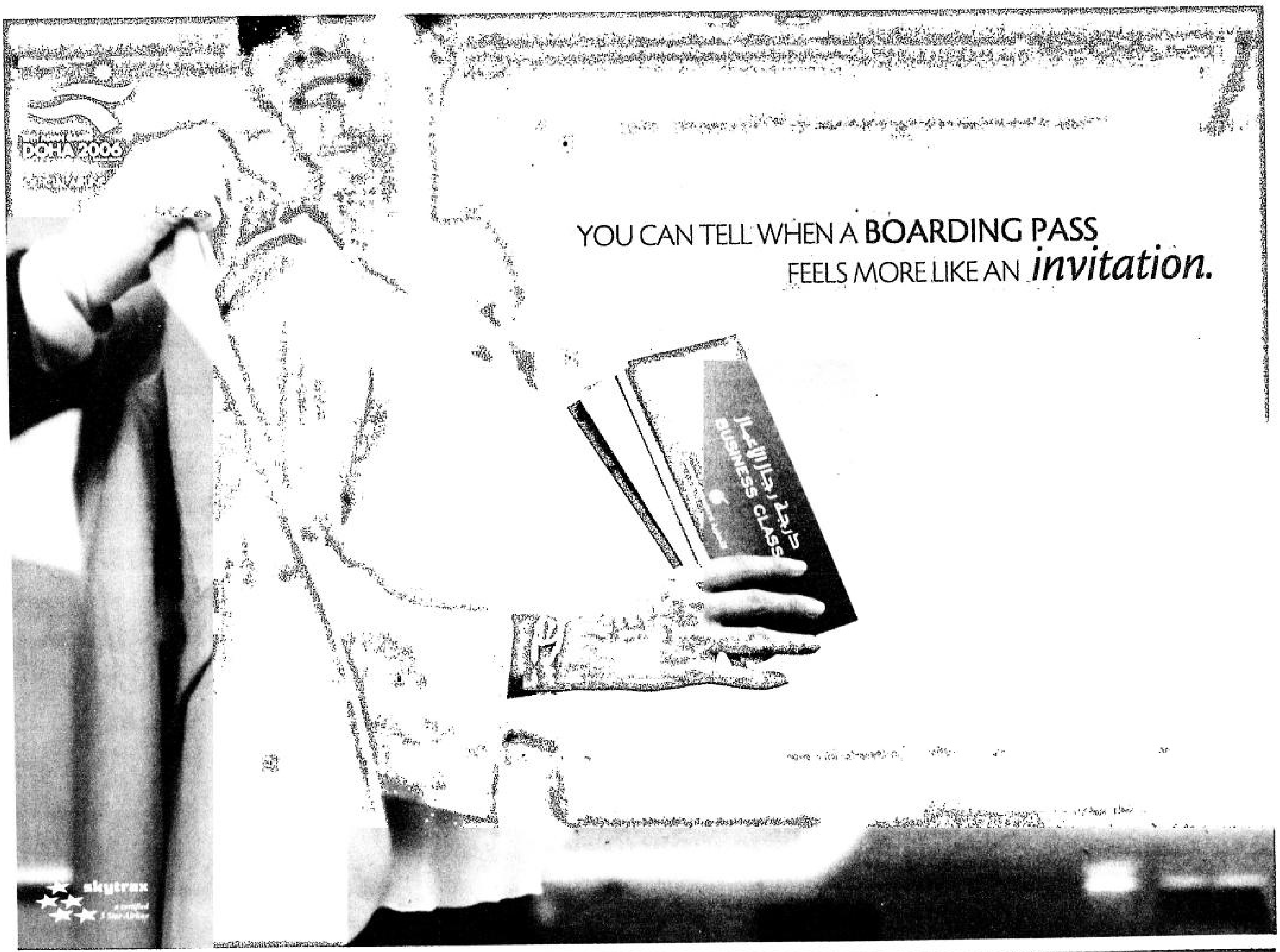
The Young Creative team from Leo Burnett Manila, Cecilia Enriquez and John Paul Cuison won the chance to represent the country at Cannes in the Young Lions competition.

Philippine short-lists at Cannes 2006: press— BBDO Guerrero Ortega, Pizza Hut "Ice"; Childhope Asia "Fireplace", "Giftpacks" and "Christmas Tree"; Y&R, Concordia Children's Services "Piglet"; outdoor—DM9JaymeSyfu, Tower Records "White"; Ogilvy & Mather, Philippine Daily Inquirer "Volcanic Ash"; The Economist "Predictive Text", "Farsighted"; and Unilever Phil. Pond's Anti-Bacterial Facial Scrub "Pore"; BBDO Guerrero Ortega, Childhope Asia "Gifts", "Fireplace", "Tree";

Radio short-list

Radio—TBWA\Santiago Mangada Puno, Caramba Hot Sauce "BeeGees"; JWT Manila, Comic Quest Bookstore "Mr. Fantastic"; BBDO Guerrero Ortega, FedEx "The Delivery";

Direct— BBDO Guerrero Ortega, KBP Radio Advertising Awards "Test Their Radio-Making Skills"; promo—141 Worldwide, Coca-Cola "Lose Gain"; media—Mediacom Philippines, Sara Lee Ambi Pur Home Freshener "Smell-Surround."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WHAT'S INSIDE

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TAULAVA: More woes ahead JESS YUSON

DOJ files tax evasion charges vs Asi Taulava

Cage star failed to file tax returns

By Jocelyn R. Uy

FROM A BASKETBALL COURT TO A court of law.

Professional basketball player Paul Asi Taulava will soon be appearing in a Makati regional trial court to face two counts of tax evasion the Department of Justice filed against him yesterday.

In a complaint filed in the Makati clerk of court office, State Prosecutor Ma. Cristina Montera-Barot said Taulava "willfully, unlawfully and feloniously" failed to file his income tax returns for 1999 and 2000, a violation of the National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC).

"There is reasonable ground to believe that a crime has been committed and that the accused is probably guilty thereof," Montera-Barot said. She recommended a bail of P40,000 for Taulava's temporary liberty. The cases against him will be raffled off on Thursday. The complaint, however, did not indicate how much he earned in 1999 and 2000 or the amount of taxes he should have paid.

Taulava is the sixth celebrity to be charged with tax evasion by the government. The others are actor Richard Gomez, talent manager Douglas Quijano, actresses Ruffa Gutierrez-Bektas, Judy Ann Santos and singer Regine Velasquez.

Based on the records of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the basketball star began working in the country in 1998 when he was hired by DDS Productmakers to play in their Blu Detergent team. He reportedly received a monthly salary of P300,000 from the company.

The following year, Taulava reportedly earned P1 million for endorsing products of Adidas Phils. Inc. From 1999 to 2000, Pilipino Telephone Corp. hired him as a "skilled professional athlete" to play for their team in the Philippine Basketball Association. Right now, Taulava is a member of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.'s Talk 'N Text team.

Taulava had claimed that from 1999 to 2003, his employers deducted over P3.7 million in withholding taxes from his salary.

He added that he had "relied on his employer (Piltel and PLDT) who were legally obliged to file the correct or proper withholding tax returns on his behalf. A US resident since birth, he was unaware of the country's tax laws, Taulava said.

The DOJ, however, countered that the player could not use "non-familiarity with tax laws" as an excuse for violating the provisions of the NIRC.

The cases filed yesterday were among the 10 counts of tax evasion the DOJ said it would file against the PBA player who also has a pending case in court questioning his citizenship.

Motive for Makati building explosion traced to family squabble

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE GRENADE BLAST THAT OCcurred in Makati City on Monday was not meant to harm Mayor Jejomar Binay, a police official stressed yesterday.

Chief Supt. Wilfredo Garcia, Southern Police District Director, said the incident, which occurred in front of the three-story Aquaventure House at the corner of St. Paul and Mayapis Streets, arose from a dispute among family members who own the diving shop housed in the building.

Aquaventure House also serves as the office of Aquaventure Philippines, a diving equipment shop and training center.

The building is just a block away from Binay's house. Garcia, however, said that this was just a coincidence.

The police had earlier said that a watchman, who had figured in a fight with the owner, could be behind the blast. But further investigation showed that the incident was caused by a family squabble.

"It is a domestic problem. Definitely, it was not politically motivated. There was no intention to harm the mayor," Garcia told the INQUIRER.

The explosion, which occurred at 6:15 a.m. Monday, was caused by an MK2 fragmentation grenade that had been planted in a plant box below the shop's glass-paneled façade.

Witnesses told the police that they saw two men on board a red motorcycle leaving the area immediately after the explosion.

Garcia said the police were still trying to verify the owner of the motorcycle with the Land Transportation Office based on the license plate number which witnesses had jotted down.

Binay, meanwhile, has called for an emergency security command conference today to assess the threats to Makati, the country's financial and business capital.

Barangay officials, commanders and officers of the Makati Police District, the Department of Public Safety, fire department and security establishments were asked to attend the conference.

Should William Concepcion decide to publish the success story of his printing business, there would be a chapter about how BPI Family Savings Bank helped him.

During college, Mr. William Concepcion did part-time work at his uncle's printing press in Manila. Since then, he had set his sights on building his own printing business. *"I went into several other businesses, waiting for the right opportunity to come. And when it came in 1985, I started my dream business"*, Concepcion said, thinking about that day when WILLPRINT opened its doors to its first clients.

WILLPRINT started in a small building in Naga City, with letterpress machines and only 12 employees. In no time, Mr. Concepcion managed to position his company as one of the key businesses in Bicol. In 1992, they moved to their own four-storey building in Naga.

"Like any business, we also encountered problems, such as acquisition of technology and limited production capacity. This is where we needed the help of BPI Family Savings Bank", said Mr. Concepcion.

With the loan from BPI Family Bank's Grow Your SME Business Loan, WILLPRINT was able to purchase more printing machines and other equipment. Most importantly, the Concepcion family was able to construct its own printing complex in Concepcion Grande, Naga City. Today, WILLPRINT is the leading printing company in Bicol, with several branches all over the region, providing employment to more than 150 employees. *"The loan helped a lot. We are now in a unique competitive market position. Thanks to* BPI Family Savings Bank", Mr. Concepcion said as he stood proudly in front of the WILLPRINT printing complex, smiling.

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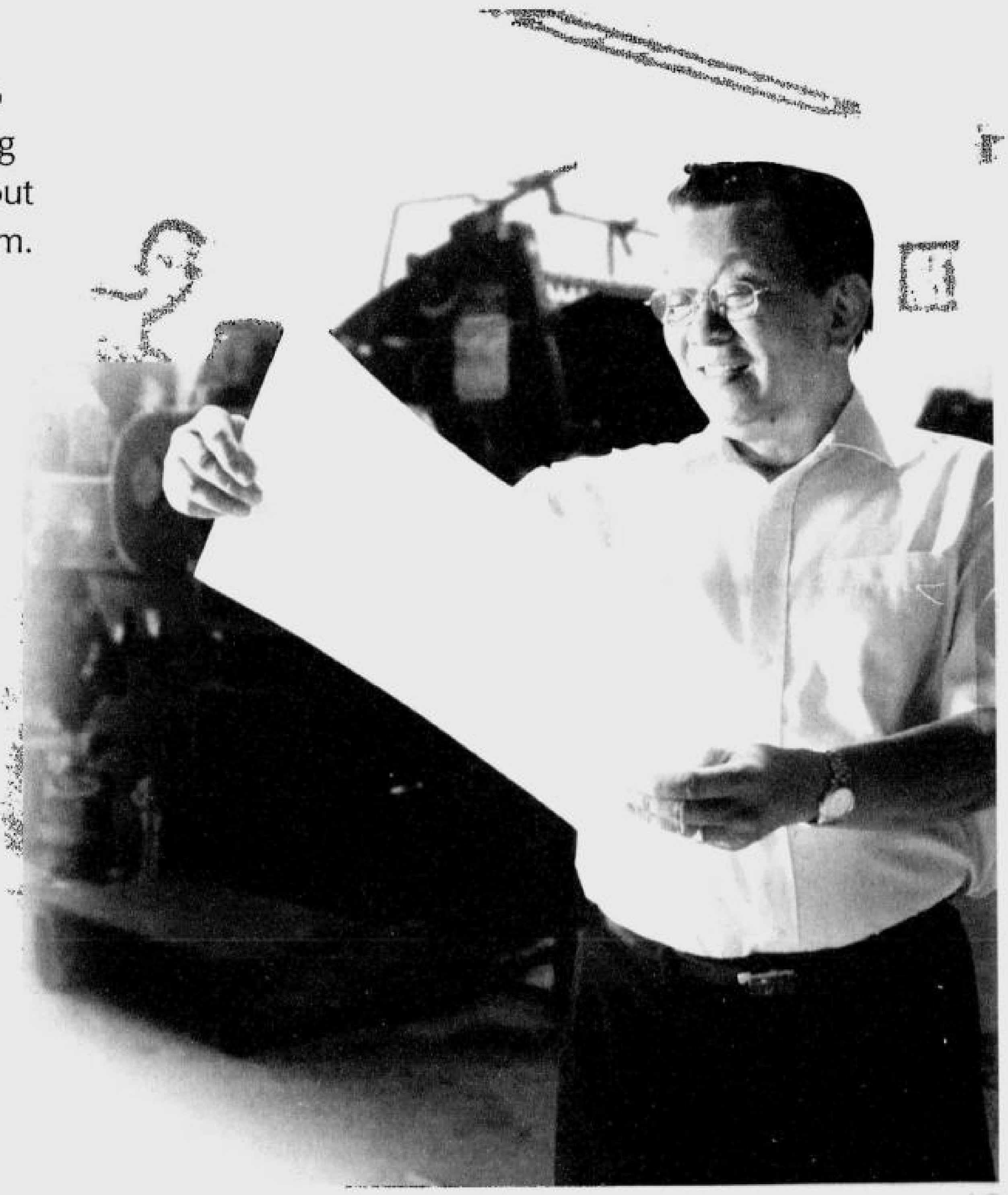

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San Juan bans ads on short-time stay in motels

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

OFFERING DISCOUNTS AND SHORT-time stays in motels? Tell no one, if you are in San Juan.

The municipal council has imposed a ban on all kinds of billboards, even flyers, that advertise discounted short-time rates in motels, inns or hotels in the town.

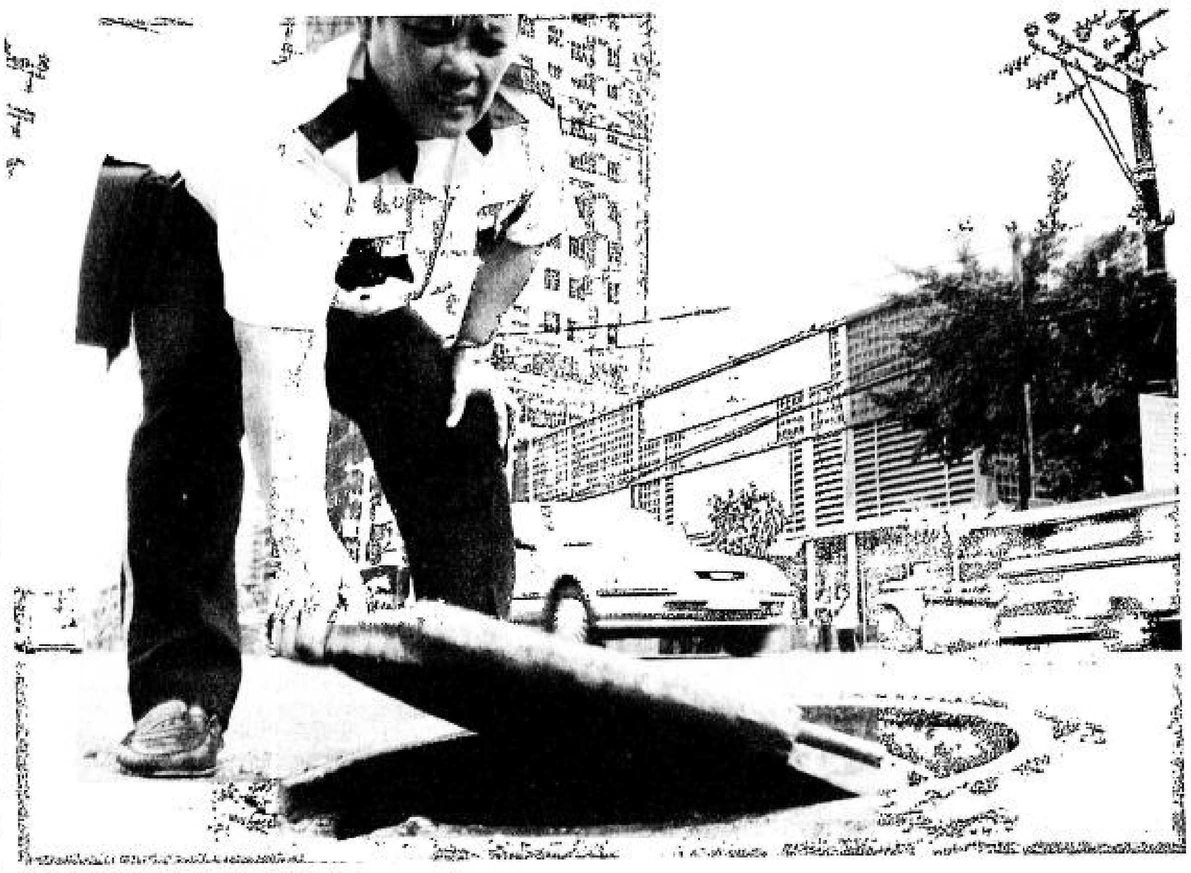
Vice Mayor Leonardo Celles told the INQUIRER that although there are no big motels in the town, they have been receiving a lot of complaints from residents about the proliferation of posters and stickers enticing customers to avail of low-priced, three-hour stays in motels.

Most of these motels are in nearby Cubao in Quezon City, Sta. Mesa in Manila and Mandaluyong City.

The ordinance prohibits "any motel, inn or hotel from posting streamers, signboards, billboards, printed ads, printed materials such as flyers, stickers, leaflets and cards advertising discounted short-time or special promotions in San Juan." But it does not cover posters just showing the logo or the name of the motels which are also common.

Celles said that unless the posters talk about specific promotions or discounts or invite customers to short-time stays, they would be spared. Members of the Task Force Disiplina and barangay officials have been ordered to confiscate posters and other promotional materials that violate the ordinance.

Motel owners will also pay fines up to P2,500 and render community service for every violation of the ordinance.



ROAD HAZARD
A traffic enforcer shows the broken cover of a manhole at the corner of Samat Street and Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City. Motorists and pedestrians have complained about the manhole that had already caused several accidents in the past, with zero results.

EDWIN BACASMAS

MANILA police watch out for criminals.

ERIK ARAZAS

Double shift for cops on school patrol

By Margaux C. Ortiz

WITH THE OPENING OF CLASSES, POlicemen assigned in Tondo, Manila, have been asked to report for their shifts an hour early.

This measure would ensure the safety of students in the area, especially those who go to Chiang Kai Shek College on Narra and P. Algue Streets, St. Stephen School on Masangkay Street, and the Philippine Cultural High School on Jose Abad Santos Street, schools with a largely Filipino-Chinese student population, according to Senior Supt. Edgardo Danao of the Manila Police District (MPD).

Danao, MPD Moriones station commander, said his policemen were expected to go to work an hour earlier before their respective shifts.

"This way, the number of policemen would double during critical hours when students are expected to go to schools in the morning and go home in the late afternoon," he told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Danao added that he had assigned five motorcycle units to go around the area as a preventive measure against crimes.

"We remind parents and guardians of the students to always accompany their wards to and from the schools to prevent criminal elements, like kidnappers, from preying on young victims," the MPD official said.

More trees needed for renamed forest park

ARROCEROS Forest Park: Not a haven for birds?

JESS YUSON

By Tina G. Santos

THE ARROCEROS FOREST PARK IN MANILA IS NOT bird-friendly, according to Mayor Lito Atienza.

"All you can hear is the sound made by crickets and cicadas. Some experts I've consulted said the foliage here does not seem to attract birds," Atienza said during yesterday's inauguration of the two-story teachers' building inside the park.

The mayor added that he has ordered more trees for planting in the 2.1-hectare property, particularly those that would attract different bird species. Atienza has renamed the park as People's Botanical Park.

His statements, however, contradicted that of Haribon Foundation, an environmental group, which had said several years ago that the park's "green blanket" had attracted many birds.

According to the foundation, they had counted about 10 species which had made their nests in trees inside the park.

These included Long-tail Shrikes, Pied Fantails, Zebra Doves, Pacific Swallows, Yellow Vented Bulbuls, White-collared Kingfishers, Asian Glossy Starlings, Comoron Kingfishers and Arctic Warblers.

Winner Foundation, the park caretaker, had opposed the construction of the building for teachers on the park grounds, saying it would harm the trees and wildlife in the area.

Pending case

Winner even filed a suit against the city government, a case which is still pending before a Manila regional trial court.

Atienza, meanwhile, called the construction of the teachers building "a successful fruition of our dream to build a spacious, modern building amidst an oasis where demanding tasks can be performed with a measure of comfort for our school officials."

"After a long time, they now have a place they can truly call their own," he said.

"This place will be good for educating the public about taking care of our environment," the mayor added.

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- Digital Printing: Value and Profitability
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- Creative Entrepreneurship: Key to Sustaining and Managing Business Enterprise
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METROBRIEFS

'We want Mendiola'

A GROUP of lawyers who had earlier vowed to stage a rally at the foot of the Chino Roces Bridge (formerly Mendiola) yesterday threatened to sue the Manila government. Lawyer Jose Anselmo Cadiz, Integrated Bar of the Philippines president, said City Hall "granted" them a rally permit on Monday afternoon, but not in the area. "They allowed us to gather at Plaza Miranda, but that's not our request. We want to go to Mendiola. A modification and diversion of the rally elsewhere is a rejection," he said, adding that they are now preparing a petition to question the decision of the city government. "We will exhaust all legal remedies in court, but we have yet to decide whether to file it in the Court of Appeals or in the regional trial court," Cadiz added. IBP officers and members, law students and a number of multisectoral organizations plan to hold a mass action at the foot of the bridge at 2:30 p.m. tomorrow. The event aims to "commemorate and assert our freedom of assembly and of expression which are sacred fundamental rights guaranteed by our Bill of Rights under our Constitution," he said. The city government has declared the area a no-rally zone because of its proximity to Malacañang Palace. *Tina G. Santos*

Not the same hotel

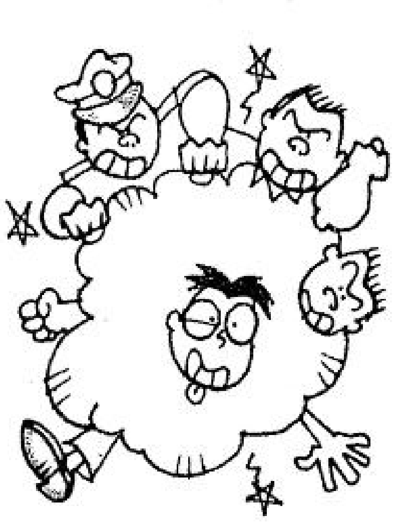
MAKATI City Administrator Nicanor V. Santiago Jr. yesterday clarified that a hotel that the city government had earlier ordered shut was not the hotel in Pasig City which has the same name. "The Astoria Hotel closed down by the city government of Makati is not the same as the Astoria Plaza located in the Ortigas Business District in Pasig City," Santiago said in a certification sent yesterday to the INQUIRER.

Elderly man arrested

A SEPTUAGENARIAN was arrested last week for allegedly collecting fees from at least 25 persons in exchange for jobs overseas. Rey Ungos, 72, of 1304 Sergio Loyola St. (formerly Lepanto), Sampaloc, Manila, has been charged with large-scale illegal recruitment and estafa in the Manila City Prosecutor's Office, according to NBI National Capital Region (NCR) Office chief Ruel Lasala. Most of his victims were new graduates and students at the University Belt in Manila, Lasala said. "The suspect used a relatively new modus operandi," the NBI official added. Instead of demanding a huge placement fee from his victims, Ungos only asked for P3,000 to P8,000, which was "affordable for students and fresh graduates." *Margaux C. Ortiz*

Junk shops face closure

THIRTY-NINE junk shops are facing closure in Muntinlupa City for failing to abide by the new standards set by the local government for their operations. The city's Environment and Sanitation Council and the Business Permit and License Office had earlier ordered the owners of junk shops in Muntinlupa to redesign their stores and designate areas for processing, storing, segregating and receiving scraps and bottles. The owners were also required to list down every day all the items they purchase as well as the name of the vendees. "This way, the authorities could track down easily those traders selling stolen cables," said Tez Navarro, public information office head. However, not all shop owners have complied with the new rules, said Navarro. *Jocelyn R. Uy*



Teen sues cop, 2 sons

A POLICEMEN and his two sons are facing legal action for allegedly ganging up on a high school freshman in Quezon City. PO2 Juan Javier, detailed with the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG), and his sons aged 16 and 20 were charged with grave threats and physical injuries by the 14-year-old boy. In a complaint in the Quezon City prosecutor's office, the boy, represented by his mother, accused the policeman and his sons of mauling him on June 16. The boy said the three beat him up after he was told to stop bullying Javier's younger son who was his classmate. The victim narrated that he was standing near a store in Cubao on June 16 when Javier suddenly dragged him into a Starex van parked nearby. When he tried to resist, the policeman allegedly aimed his .45-caliber pistol at his face. Inside the van were Javier's sons, who took turns hitting him, the boy said in his sworn affidavit. He added that he was later taken to the CIDG office at Camp Crame, where he was allegedly forced to sign a statement promising never to make trouble for Javier's younger son. He added that he was only allowed to go home when his parents went to the CIDG to ask why he was being detained. A medico-legal exam later revealed that the boy had bruises and scratches in the wrist and forearm. *DJ Yap*

Palestinian factions near deal in crisis talks

GAZA CITY—PALESTINIAN FACTIONS have made progress towards an agreement on a deal that could implicitly recognize Israel and end a political and fiscal crisis, a participant at key talks Monday said.

Bitter rivals Hamas, which heads a Western-boycotted government, and the Fatah party of president Mahmud Abbas met late into the night, with the end of a second round of crisis talks due in principle to expire Wednesday.

The focus of talks has been a statehood initiative which implicitly recognizes Israel's right to exist by calling for a Palestinian state on land conquered in 1967, an end to attacks in Israel and a national unity government.

Unless the initiative is accepted by all factions, Abbas will put it to a referendum—already set for July 26—to the fury of Hamas which claims the unprecedented vote amounts to an attempt to overthrow its government.

According to the latest opinion poll, three quarters of Palestinians support the initiative, but only 47 percent would actually go out and vote in favor of the document should the plebiscite take place.

Hamas' refusal so far to recognize the Jewish state, renounce violence or abide by past agreements has seen its government boycotted by the West and direct EU and US aid suspended, sending its finances into free fall.

Rivalry between Fatah and Hamas has spilled over into deadly clashes and prompted fears of civil war, but despite optimism, factions are yet to agree on the most thorny aspects of the 18-point "national conciliation document." One of the negotiators, Ibrahim Abu al-Naja, an official of a nationalist and Islamist umbrella group, said there was "real progress on the various subjects under discussion." "Two days of intense discussions are still needed to reach a national agreement," he added.

He said earlier that sticking points remained the supremacy of the Palestine Liberation Organization, acceptance of a Palestinian state in the territories occupied in 1967, and talks with Israel.

Hamas' charter calls for armed resistance rather than negotiations to solve the Middle East conflict, and the destruction of the Jewish state rather than an independent Palestine in Gaza and the West Bank, including east Jerusalem.

Tempering the optimism, Abbas spokesperson Nabil Abu Rudeina declared it "too early to speak of an imminent deal," Prime minister Ismail Haniya, head of the Hamas-led government, told reporters in Gaza City that dialogue was continuing "with the utmost seriousness with a view to reaching agreements on certain points of the prisoners' document." Yet he echoed that it was "premature" to talk about a government of a national unity, as stipulated in the document.

Hamas parliamentary spokesperson Salah al-Bardwail said the dialogue had produced agreement on "90 percent" of the document, but cautioned against undue optimism with the most tricky questions still to play for.

"I think difficulties will crop up when we get down to the details." Observers say the statehood charter, drawn up by faction leaders who are jailed in Israel, would amount to a de-facto recognition of Israel, one of the West's central demands before resuming aid to the beleaguered Hamas government.

In the interim, officials said the European Commission hopes to start sending a 125-million-dollar aid package to the Palestinians that will bypass the Hamas-led government, by the end of the week.

Visiting EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner on Monday discussed the new package with Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, who stopped short of endorsing the deal, and Abbas.

Western aid cuts have meant few of the 160,000 Palestinian civil servants have been paid since Hamas took office in March.

AFP

Russia seeks release of hostages

MOSCOW—MOSCOW ON MONDAY CALLED for the immediate release of four Russian diplomats taken hostage in Iraq by a group linked to al-Qaida which has given the Russian government 48 hours to pull out of Chechnya and free Chechen prisoners.

"We appeal to the kidnappers to immediately release the Russian citizens and ensure their safety," foreign ministry spokesperson Mikhael Kamynin said in a statement.

The Mujahedeen Shura (consultative) Council, which groups eight armed factions led by al-Qaida, claimed responsibility on Monday for the abduction of the four Russian diplomats and two US soldiers, in statements posted on the Internet.

The group said if Moscow's troops did not leave Chechnya, a mostly Muslim breakaway republic in the Russian Caucasus, it would have to "take the consequences."

"God enabled the lions of unification to capture four Russian diplomats in Iraq and kill a fifth," the Mujahedeen Shura Council said in its statement.

It said the council's Islamic court had decided to give the Russian government 48 hours to "withdraw immediately from Chechnya" and "release all our brothers and sisters detained in Russian prisons." The Russian diplomats were abducted on June 3 when unidentified gunmen attacked their vehicle in the upmarket west Baghdad neighborhood of Mansour.

One Russian diplomat was killed in the attack and the other four abducted.

The dead Russian man has been named as Vitaly Titov. The four missing are Fyodor Zaytsev, Rinat Aglyulin, Anatoly Smirnov and Oleg Fedosseyev.

"We know in advance that there will be appeals ... to release those (hostages) under the pretext that Russia took a clear stand in rejecting the (US-led) war on Iraq," the Mujahedeen Shura Council said.

It accused the Russian government of "killing and displacing ... our people in Chechnya and Afghanistan" and of "sending its diplomats to Iraq to support the crusader enterprise led by America" and "confer legitimacy" on the US-backed Iraqi government.

AFP

WORLDBRIEFS

Hostages freed in Brazil

RIO DE JANEIRO—More than 250 hostages, including 214 women and dozens of children, were released Monday by prisoners at a high-security prison after the inmates ended their uprising, justice officials told AFP. "All the hostages have been freed" at the Viana prison, said the spokesperson for the state justice secretariat of Espiritu Santo state, where rioting prisoners seized members of visiting families Saturday to protest prison conditions. The spokesperson insisted that the prisoners "got nothing" from the state to end the uprising. The prisoners had demanded the return to their facility of five inmates transferred to a federal penitentiary a month earlier. Two prisoners were killed in the uprising, one of them decapitated, and their bodies displayed on a wall outside the prison unit, officials confirmed earlier. *AFP*

2 US soldiers abducted

BAGHDAD—A group linked to al-Qaida in Iraq said on Monday it had abducted two US soldiers, and thousands of US troops scoured the countryside for the missing men. "Your brothers in the military wing of the Mujahideen Shura Council kidnapped two American soldiers near Yusufiya," the Sunni Arab group said. "We will provide you with more details about the incident in the next coming days." Some 8,000 US and Iraqi troops, supported by aircraft, were hunting for the two missing soldiers, who have been identified as Private Thomas Lowell Tucker, 25, from Madras, Oregon and Private Kristian Menchaca, 23, from Houston, Texas. The US military is still looking for Keith Maupin, the only other missing soldier. He was abducted on April 9, 2004, when his convoy was ambushed in Baghdad. *Reuters*

Palestinians get partial pay

GAZA—Palestinian government workers lined up at post offices in Gaza on Monday to receive cash that members of the Hamas-led administration hand-carried into the territory to sidestep a Western aid boycott. "This is only an injection to put us to sleep and then wake up in pain again," said a government employee who gave his name only as Abu Abdallah. He was one of 90,000 workers on the Palestinian Authority payroll allocated $300 as partial payment after more than three months without wages. "Tomorrow or the day after, we will pay those in the West Bank with the same salaries," said Palestinian Authority Finance Minister Omar Abdel-Razek. The money was paid through the government-owned Postal Bank.

Reuters

Belarus officials sanctioned

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush on Monday froze the US assets of hardline Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko and nine other individuals deemed obstacles to democracy in the former Soviet republic. "There is simply no place in a Europe whole and free for a regime of this kind," Bush said in a letter to the US Congress announcing his executive order, which affects assets held in the United States or by US financial institutions. White House spokesperson Tony Snow said in a statement that all of those affected were "responsible for undermining Belarus' democratic processes or institutions, human rights abuses, or public corruption." "These sanctions, imposed in coordination with targeted financial sanctions adopted by the European Union, indicate the international community's intention to hold to account those responsible for abuses in Belarus," said Snow. *AFP*

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Japan withdraws troops from Iraq

TOKYO—PRIME MINISTER JUNICHIRO KOIZUMI announced on Tuesday that Japan will withdraw its troops from Iraq, ending the Japanese military's riskiest and most ambitious overseas mission since World War Two.

Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki said on Monday his forces would take over security from July in the southern province of Muthanna, where the British oversee a multinational contingent that includes Japanese troops.

Japan's troop dispatch—a symbol of Tokyo's willingness to put "boots on the ground" for its close ally, the United States, and to take a bigger global security role—won praise from Washington. But it was opposed by many at home including critics who said the dispatch violated Japan's pacifist constitution.

"I want to express my profound respect and gratitude to the Self-Defense Forces (troops) who sweated in tough conditions with the strong awareness they were conducting their activities in Iraq for all of the Japanese people," Koizumi told a news conference at which he pledged to keep supporting Iraq's nation building.

The decision to withdraw comes ahead of Koizumi's visit to Washington for talks with President George W. Bush in late June and before he steps down as prime minister in September.

No Japanese soldiers have been killed or wounded in Iraq, but Koizumi faced a political crisis in 2004 when three Japanese civilians were taken hostage by insurgents. The three, as well as two others taken hostage later, were released unharmed. In all, six Japanese citizens, including two diplomats, have been killed by insurgents in Iraq.

Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso said the troops had won high marks for their military discipline.

"I think such views have made a very big contribution to improving the brand image of Japan as a country," he told a news conference ahead of the official announcement.

Japan has said its withdrawal from the southern city of Samawa had to be coordinated with Britain and Australia, whose troops provide security for the roughly 550 Japanese soldiers engaged in reconstruction and humanitarian work.

Japanese Defense Minister Fukushiro Nukaga immediately issued an order for the troop withdraw, Kyodo news agency said. The process could be completed by the end of July, Kyodo said.

Australian Prime Minister John Howard said the Australian troops would keep "looking after the Japanese until the Japanese have gone, and I expect that to be quite soon." In Canberra, Defense Minister Brendan Nelson said on Tuesday that Australia would re-assign its 460 troops protecting Japanese forces to help the Iraqi military secure the border with Syria.

"It has the potential to be more dangerous for our soldiers.

We don't underestimate the risk," he told reporters.

After the troop withdrawal, Japan will expand the mission of its air force planes based in Kuwait to include the airlifting of UN personnel, said Koizumi's coalition partner, New Komeito party chief Takenori Kanzaki.

Japan decided to send ground troops to Iraq in December 2003, and the first major contingent arrived in February 2004. *Reuters*

JAPANESE troops secure an area June 12 in the southern city of Samawa during the visit of a representative of the Japanese foreign ministry to the site where a power plant will be built. AFP

Bush warns of sanctions if Iran nixes offer

KINGS POINT, NY—PRESIDENT George W. Bush said on Monday Iran faces the prospect of UN Security Council action and progressively stronger sanctions if it rejects an offer aimed at containing its nuclear program.

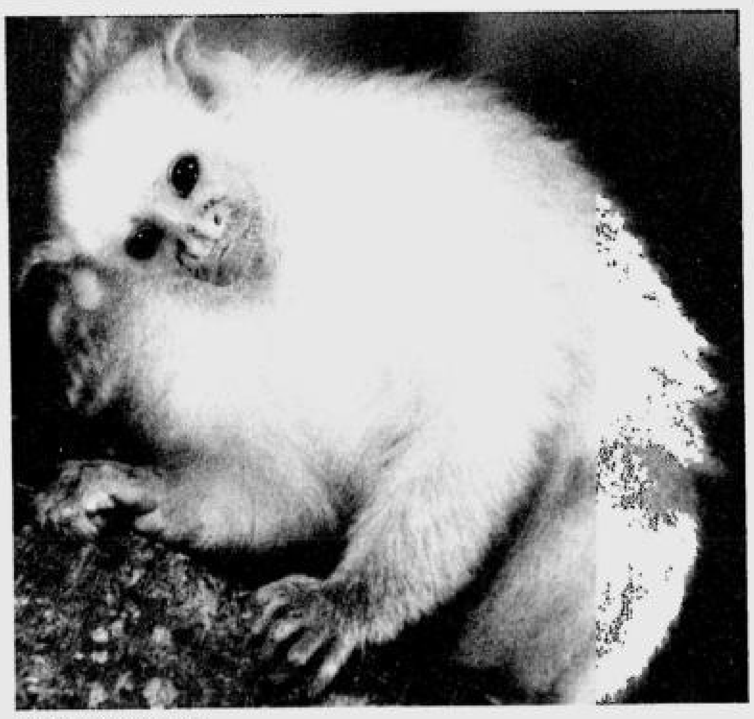
"If Iran's leaders want peace and prosperity and a more hopeful future for their people, they should accept our offer, abandon any ambitions to obtain nuclear weapons, and come into compliance with their international obligations," Bush said.

He spoke in a commencement speech to the graduating class of the US Merchant Marine a day before heading to Vienna to attend a US-European Union summit.

A US-backed package of incentives was offered to Iran early this month, and Bush said the United States would join European talks with Iran if it agreed to verifiably suspend its nuclear enrichment program. The five UN Security Council permanent members plus Germany offered Iran incentives to stop purifying uranium, which Tehran says would generate electricity but which the West sees as a disguised atomic bomb project.

So far Tehran has refused to stop the enrichment while saying the incentives offer was a positive step. Russian President Vladimir Putin called Bush on Monday to discuss Iran, a White House official said.

"The presidents agreed on the importance of remaining united in their efforts to press Iran to suspend all enrichment activities and begin negotiations on the incentives package," the official said. *Reuters*



ENDANGERED

A silvery marmoset monkey is seen on its cage at the the Drusillas Park Zoo in east Sussex, England. Five of them were stolen from the zoo over the weekend. AP

N. Korea missile threat 'provocative,' says Rice

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED STATES AND Japan warned North Korea on Monday against a missile launch that experts say could reach as far as Alaska and threatened harsh action if the test flight goes ahead.

The warning coincided with the assessment by some officials that Pyongyang may have finished fueling for the launch of its long-range Taepodong-2 missile.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said a missile launch by North Korea would be viewed as a very serious matter and "provocative act" that would further isolate Pyongyang.

"We will obviously consult on next steps but I can assure everyone that it would be taken with utmost seriousness," said Rice at a conference.

In Tokyo, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, who has twice met North Korean leader Kim Jong-il since taking office in 2001, said Tokyo, Washington and Seoul were all urging Pyongyang to act rationally and with restraint.

"Even now, we hope that they will not do this," Koizumi told a news conference. "But if they ignore our views and launch a missile, then the Japanese government, consulting with the United States, would have to respond harshly." Koizumi declined to specify what steps Japan would take.

The US is consulting fellow members of the UN Security Council, said Washington's ambassador to the United Nations, John Bolton. Bolton said Washington did not know what North Korea's intentions were. The US has found itself blocked by veto-wielding council members China and Russia in past attempts to raise North Korea's nuclear-weapons program in the Security Council.

Pentagon spokesperson Bryan Whitman said the United States had a limited missile-defense system. Asked if the US military would try to shoot down a North Korean missile, he would not discuss details about the capabilities or potential use of the system.

"I will not get into or discuss any specific alert status or capabilities," Whitman told reporters.

South Korean broadcaster YTN cited officials in Seoul as saying a launch of the North's Taepodong-2 missile was imminent.

However, speculation that the missile would be fired over the weekend came to nothing, and forecasts of cloud and rain over North Korea until Wednesday could delay it even further. *Reuters*

Prosecutors seek hanging for Saddam, 3 others

BAGHDAD—PROSECUTORS DEMANDED the death penalty on Monday for Saddam Hussein and three of his former top aides for crimes against humanity following a 1982 crackdown on Shiites in which hundreds were killed and tortured.

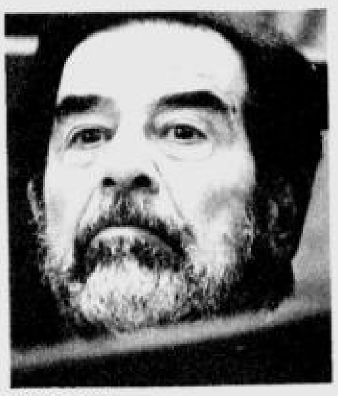
A smiling and relaxed Saddam, who has dismissed the US-backed court as a farce, told the chief prosecutor after he finished his closing arguments: "Well done." Saddam faces death by hanging if found guilty. Prosecutors also requested the death penalty for Saddam's half-brother Barzan al-Tikriti, former vice-president Taha Yassin Ramadan and the former chief judge of Saddam's Revolutionary Court, Awad Hamed al-Bander.

Saddam, Barzan, Ramadan, Bander and four local Baath party officials are charged with crimes against humanity for their roles in the killings, torture and executions that followed an attempt on the Iraqi leader's life in the village of Dujail.

"The prosecution demand that the court impose the heaviest penalties on those defendants who spread corruption on earth and where not even trees escape their oppression, so we demand the court impose the death penalty," chief prosecutor Jaafar al-Moussawi told chief Judge Raouf Abdel Rahman.

Eight months into a tumultuous trial marred by the killings of two defense lawyers, the resignation of a judge and tirades from the defendants, prosecutors presented final statements in a heavily-fortified Baghdad courtroom.

Defense lawyers will start making final remarks for each of the eight defendants on July 10. A five-judge panel will then adjourn to consider a verdict. A US official said the panel was expected to take 60 days before reaching a verdict, expected by mid-September. *Reuters*



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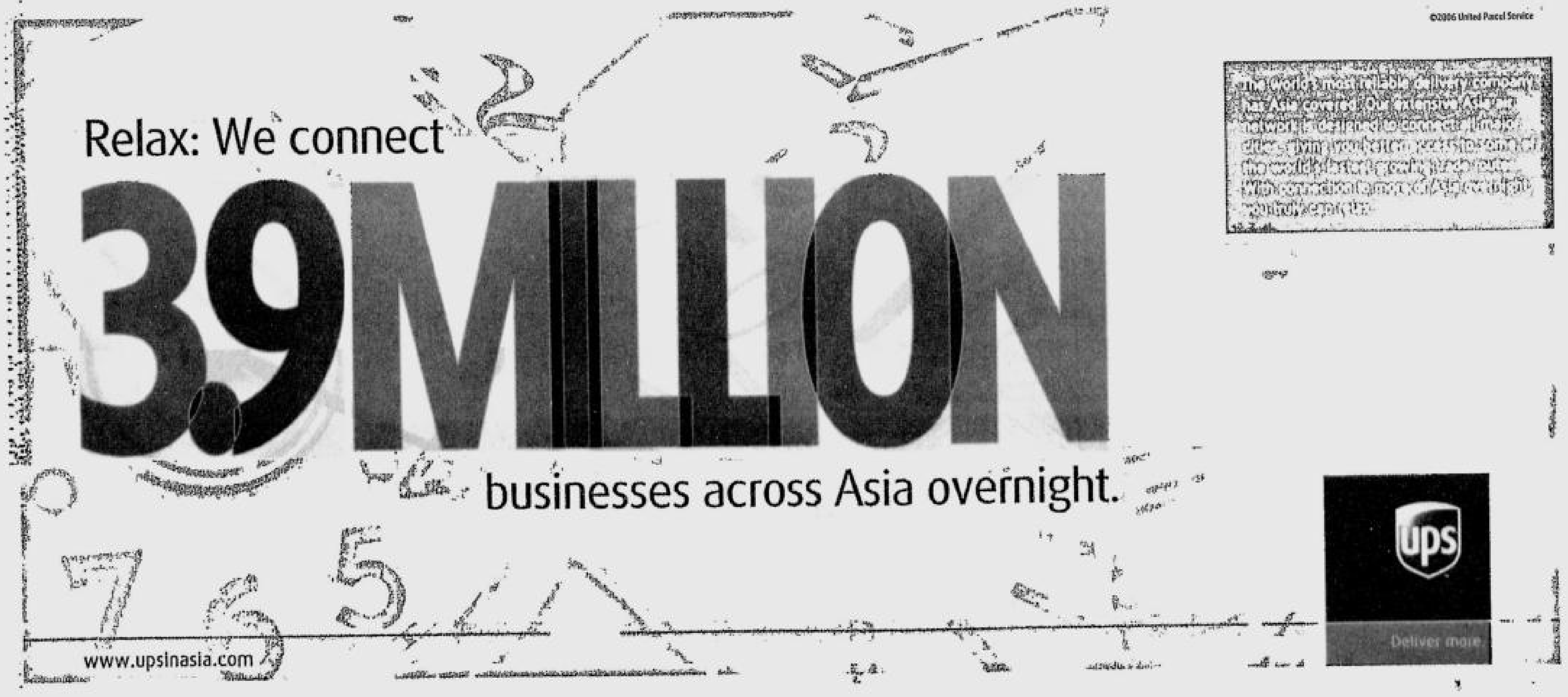

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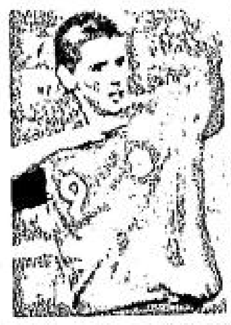

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2006

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WHAT'S INSIDE
■ Reeling Mavs find comfort in trip home /A26

'Pacquiao fight over in 6 rounds'

By Marc Anthony Reyes

IT WILL BE ALL OVER IN SIX rounds or less.

Freddie Roach, Manny Pacquiao's master tactician, made that prediction yesterday regarding the Filipino boxing hero's fight against Mexican Oscar Larios on July 2.

Roach based his forecast from the way his ward shook off excess pounds and rust after a month-long training at his Wild Card gym in Hollywood.

"The match will not last the distance because it will be over in six rounds or less," said Roach who flew in with Pacquiao yesterday morning.

Despite being still over the 130-lb limit, Pacquiao's handlers are confident that he will make the weight when it's time to tip the scales.

IN THE GROOVE: Pacquiao arrives from Los Angeles for the final phase of his training. JESS YUSON

"Manny's trainers would tell you pointblank what a boxer's condition is, and they say that Manny is in really good shape," Eric Pineda, business manager to Pacquiao, told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

To underline that confidence, Pacquiao shrugged off jet-lag and plunged into training at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex from noon to 2 p.m.

The people inside the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines gym at the RMSC stood in silence for the two hours the champ was there.

He forayed into a full workout, complete with speed ball, skip rope and abdominal exercises that featured his daily dose of 1,000 crunches.

"I know that Larios has what it takes to win, and being a former world champion I will not underestimate his capability," said Pacquiao.

The champ's wit and humor even came out when asked about Roach's predictions.

"Six rounds? It's scary if it lasts that long," Pacquiao said half-jokingly.

Tomorrow, Pacquiao will spar with Russian Rustam Lugaev, whom he brought to Manila from Los Angeles. *With reports from Nikko Dizon*

See Recah Trinidad's Bare Eye A24

NCAA green-lights Lions' Nigerian 'import'

By Marc Anthony Reyes

NIGERIAN SAMUEL EKWE HAS been given the approval to play for San Beda in the NCAA men's basketball tournament.

The NCAA management committee yesterday decided that the 6-foot-8, 21-year-old Ekwe is eligible to beef up the Red Lions for this season having furnished the necessary documents.

"San Beda beat the deadline and we were satisfied with what they submitted," said Mancom chair Bernie Atienza of host school College of St. Benilde after their meeting at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

The documents included Ekwe's grade equivalent from the Commission on Higher Education, according to Atienza.

The slotman has completed a one-year residency with San Beda, where he is expected to play a major role in the Red Lions' bid to reclaim the title they last won in 1978.

Ekwe made his San Beda debut in the Philippinet Olympic Festival. He will play alongside 2004 Rookie of the Year Yousif Aljamal, a Filipino whose father is a Saudi Arabian.

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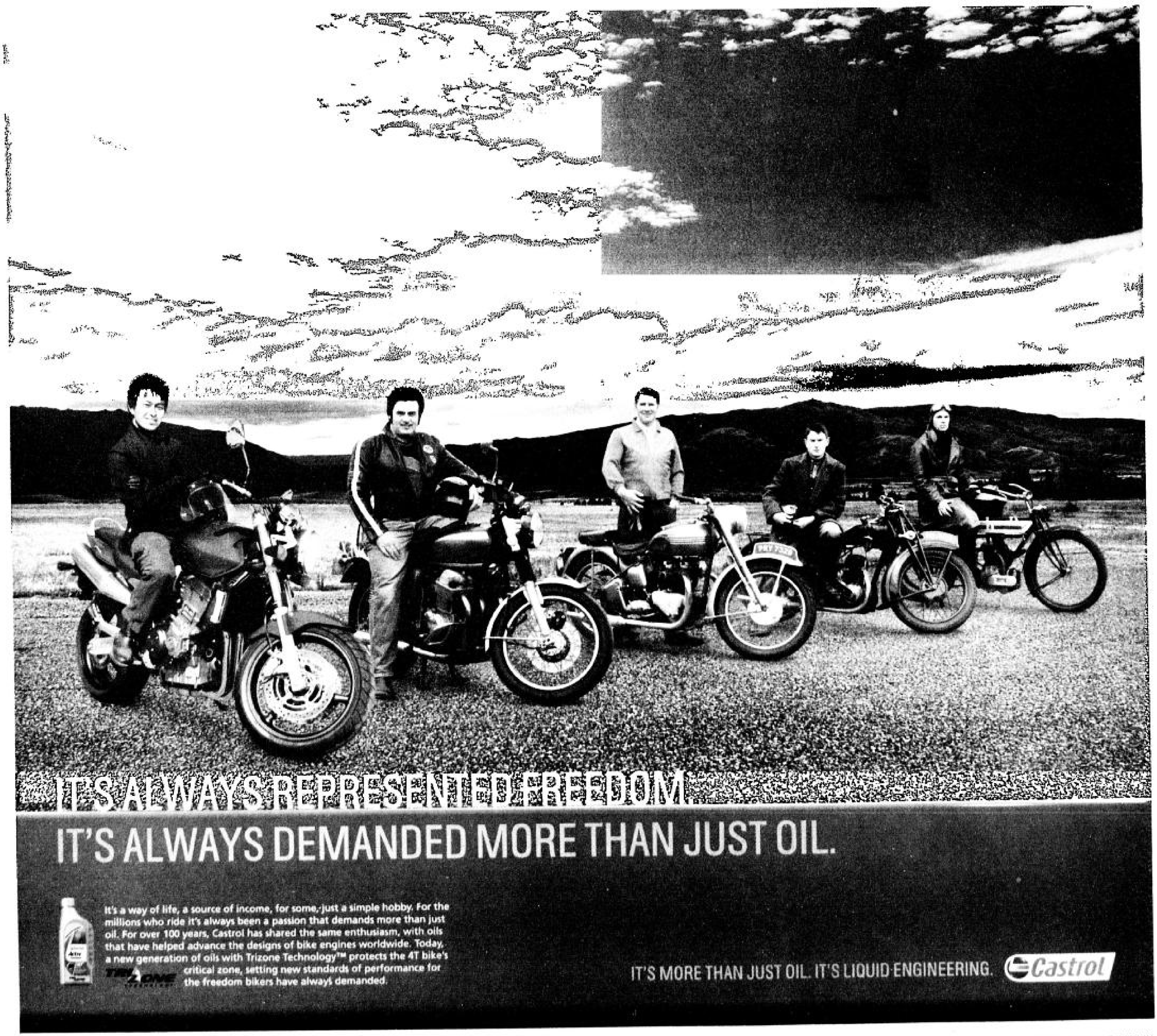
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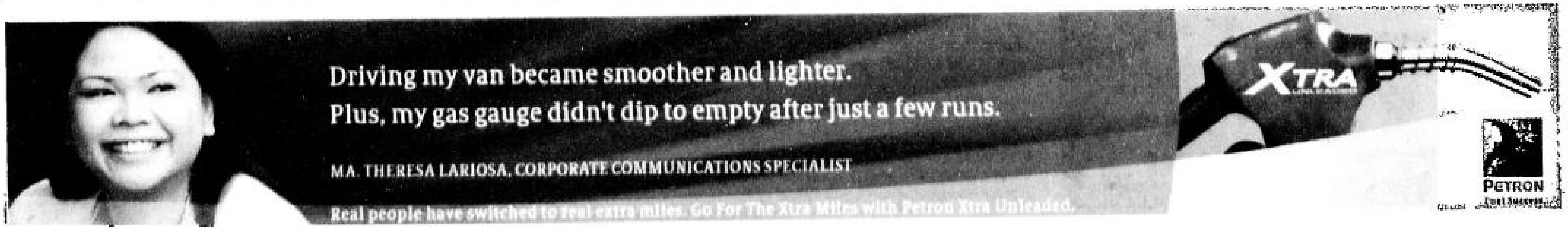

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Iloilo nips Pagadian five in series opener

POTOTAN, ILOILO—THE TOYOTA-ILOILO WARRIORS scored another shocking victory Friday night, this time taking the scalp of the Pagadian Explorers, 86-83, to draw first blood in their best-of-three southern semifinal series in the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship at the Astrodome here.

The Warriors of the Iloilo Basketball League and Mayor Jerry Trenas, who finished at the bottom of the southern division at 3-8, banked on Francis Sanz's basket in the final 29 seconds to break an 83-83 tie.

"I couldn't ask for more," said coach John Trompeta, who was scheduled to leave for the United States to join his family. "I just wish this team would go all the way. I'm leaving with a heavy heart since I want to finish this conference. But I couldn't postpone my trip."

Over at the CP Tinga gym in Taguig City, Bacchus/Harbour Centre-Manila beat Laguna-Sta. Rosa, 74-68, to gain the semifinals of the tournament sponsored by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Spring Cooking Oil, Regent Foods, Firefly Lightings, Molten and Prime Channel.

The Manilans of businessman Mikee Romero and coach Lawrence Chongson led from start to finish.

The Warriors try to close out the series next Thursday at the Explorers' homecourt in Pagadian City.

The scores:

ILOILO 86—Sinco 26, Balogs 16, Senierez 15, Sanz 13, Leonida 7, Sencil 4, Bautista, Poral 2, Unarce 0, Sina-on 0.

PAGADIAN 83—Marata 22, Orquillas 18, Naron 10, Gatumbato 10, Daja 9, Singadas 8, Cortez 2, Quilo 2, P. Sinco 2, Omandam 0, Lanutan 0, Ayuk 0.

Quarters: 20-19, 40-37, 64-59, 86-83

BACCHUS 74—Membrere 13, Masbang 12, Relaga 10, Pribdhas 9, Sta. Cruz 8, Coyukang 6, Aquino 4, Cuevas 4.

LAGUNA 68—Alminario 15, Domingo 11, Nuqui 8, Proceso 6, Intano 6, Nolasco 6, Mamangon 4, Roda 4, Natividad 4, Aquino 2, Prior 2.

Quarters: 19-12, 41-35, 55-51, 74-68

Paeng tops Superbowl WC qualifier

FOUR-TIME WORLD CHAMPION PAENG NEPOMUCENO rolled a 12-game series of 2709 pinfalls Sunday to rule the Superbowl center finals in the Bowling World Cup national eliminations.

The lefty Nepomuceno, one of four keglers seeded into the Philippine team to the Doha Asian Games this December, finished ahead of Jay Carabeo, who tallied 2675, and William Monedero, who carded 2537.

Ditas dela Merced topped the ladies' elimination with 1681.

Others who also made it to the national finals from four centers were Mar Serac, Rolly Manalili, Jojo Ventura, Lilian Teano and Norma Nuevo (Coronado Lanes/Starlanes), Mel Almario, Eric Aranez, Wanda Teer and Alice Cabazor (Astrobowl/Metropolis), Willy Ng, Ben Diaz, and Anna Ng (Puyat Sports Baguio) and Ramer Medrana, Ed Vargas and Becky Ramirez (Coastal Lanes).

Competition in 18 other AMF Puyat centers are still going on. The tourney will determine the country's male and female representatives to the 42nd World Cup in Venezuela, on Nov. 4-10.

Nepomuceno posted a 225.75 average on lines of 215, 232, 256, 278, 169, 182, 255, 235, 187, 236 and 219.

Aces, Bulls eye 2-0 semis lead

GAMES TODAY (*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:40 p.m.—Red Bull vs San Miguel Beer
7:35 p.m.—Purefoods vs Alaska

DISCOMPOSURE HIT SAN MIGUEL BEER and Purefoods at the start of the PBA Philippine Cup semifinals following an almost month-long hiatus.

But Red Bull and Alaska don't expect the same listless attitude in Game 2 of the best-of-seven series today at the Araneta Coliseum.

"They (Beermen) are quite rusty," said Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao. "The long break definitely affected them."

"Still, we have to be on our toes. They've been scouting us for a long time and they know what adjustments to make," he added after beating Jong Uichico's San Miguel in Game One, 89-78.

Danny Ildefonso's sprained ankle removed one headache for Red Bull while rust clearly got the better of Dondon Hontiveros, Olsen Racela and Chris Calaguio to the Beermen's disadvantage.

Hontiveros was 0-of-7 from three-point range and could only buy a bucket in five attempts from the perimeter while Racela missed nine of his 11 shots from the field.

Ildefonso could be back in harness, depending on the feel of his left ankle. The presence of the two-time MVP plus Dorian Peña and Danny Seigle could eat up more paint space from the Bulls.

"San Miguel plays a lot like Ginebra so the preparation was not difficult at all," said Guiao. "The only thing that concerns us right now is the injury of Larry (Fonacier). We will need him in the series and we'll see how it develops."

Fonacier, the leading candidate for the rookie of the year, sprained his ankle on one of the transition plays in the third quarter of Game 1.

In the other semifinal pairing, the Aces—despite winning Game 1—are concocting a formula to neutralize the young Turks of the Giants.

James Yap made 23 of his 33 points in the fourth while Kerby Raymundo finished with 25 after scoring 19 in the first half. "They're a tough combo," said Alaska coach Tim Cone after a 94-92 squeaker over coach Ryan Gregorio's Giants. "Try to stop the other and the other one will score."

June Navarro

ACES
1
PHILIPPIN
LABAN
7

ALASKA playmaker Mike Cortez loses ball possession against the defense of Purefoods' Mark Pingris and Rey Evangelista. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Power Dance (3), Maningning (4), Batang Bukid (6), Snow Princess (1)
Race 2—Qrt/Tri)—Please Don't Stop (2), Manhattan (1), Carbon Copy (5), Lord Brian (4)
Race 3—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Romantist (7), Astra Magic (8), Yacuy (5), O Tonet (2), Bom's Treasure (3)
Race 4—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Money For Rap (8), Hello Junior (2), Guardian (9), Dow Jones (1), Luck of the Irish (10), Pyramid Realaunch (3)
Race 5—(Trifecta)—Arctic Desert (2), Ginger Candy (1), Simply Angie (5)
Race 6—(Qrt/Tri)—Western Dancer (6), Power of the Wind (1), Hezabellagio (4), Nico's Incharge (5)
Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Gentleman's Lady (7), Romblon Rock (6), Danielle's Angel (3), In D Wind (1), Naman Naman (5)
Race 6—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Ocean Cookie (2), Red Storm (3), Chelseasmile (7), Cute/Saint Bernard (4), House of Riches (9), King Aljhun (11)

AF3 frontrunner Sy two times lucky

GUANGDONG—FILIPINO RACING star Tyson Sy is doubly lucky.

Apart from escaping serious injury in a terrifying crash that wrecked his car in Round Five, he got a welcome break when organizers of the Asian Formula Three Series called off Round Six due to unsafe racing conditions at the Zhuhai International Circuit on Sunday.

The cancellation meant that Sy, who finished third in Round Five, will keep his distance from the rest of the field when the series returns here next month for the aborted leg and the next three legs of the series.

Asian F-3 Series
Standings after Round Five

DRIVERS	COUNTRY	POINTS
1. Tyson Sy	Philippines	75 pts
2. Dillon Battistini	England	56 pts
3. Dado Peña	Philippines	52 pts
4. Ali Jackson	Ireland	52 pts
5. Hames Winslow	England	42 pts

Actually, Round Six was already in progress despite heavy afternoon rains when organizers, concerned over the safety of the drivers, recalled them to the pits on orders of the supervising Hong Kong Automobile Association officials.

A race official who inspected the 4.3-kilometer circuit after the accident-marred Round Five said parts of the track were flooded.

Had the race pushed through, Briton Dillon Battistini and Filipino Dado Peña would have gained on the 18-year-old Sy, the series leader with 86 points. Sy and teammate Gaby dela Merced were not among the drivers flagged off for Round Six.

Sy's new 304 Dallara had slammed into Dela Merced's stalled car in front of the grandstand earlier, wrecking both machines.

Battistini of JA Motorsport, whose blocking maneuver caused Sy to slam into Dela Merced's car, earned 15 points for placing second in Round Five behind Irishman Ali Jackson of Aran Racing and moved up to second with 56.

He dislodged Peña of Team Goddard and Jackson who both have 52.

Peña, also 18, who drove safely to finish fourth in Round Five after winning Round Four last Saturday.

Peña said race officials made the right decision because "racing conditions out there were simply too dangerous."

HARBOUR Centre owner Mikee Romero talks about team plans as Welcoat co-owners Terry Que (left) and Raymund Yu look on.

Welcoat to maintain PBL franchise—Yu

By Jasmine W. Payo

WELCOAT PAINTS WON'T BE TOTALLY pulling out of the Philippine Basketball League after all.

Welcoat will turn over the management duties of its amateur roster to Henkel, a German-owned company which debuts in the Philippine Basketball Association this October.

Sista, a Henkel brand of water-based sealant, will be the new name the team will carry in the PBL.

Caloy Garcia will be calling the shots for Sista, while Boy Lapid will be the team manager.

"Technically, we will still have a team in the PBL," said Welcoat team owner Raymund Yu at the PSA Forum yesterday at the Pantalan Restaurant in Manila. "The franchise still belongs to us. We'll lend it to [Henkel] in their first two conferences in the PBL."

Leo Austria, meanwhile, will serve as head coach in Welcoat's maiden campaign in the pro league.

"I think we're ready for the PBA," said team co-owner Terry Que.

Yu added that Welcoat plans to include free agents in its PBA roster led by Heroes Cup Most Valuable Player Jojo Tangkay of Rain or Shine, Froilan Baguion and Al Magpayo of Montaña, and Christian Coronel of Toyota Otis.

Austria earlier disclosed that Welcoat wants to elevate big men Jay-R Reyes, Junjun Cabatu and Samigue Eman from its amateur team.

While Welcoat gears up for its pro stint, 2006 Unity Cup champion Harbour Centre also begins its rebuilding process after the departure of key players LA Tenorio and Joseph Yeo.

"We were able to show the successful tandem of La Salle and Ateneo players," said team owner Mikee Romero. "For our next team, we want to rebuild around La Salle and Ateneo players anchored on JC Intal and Rico Maierhofer. Hopefully they'll be our future stars."

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Oscar Larios can't be flat, easy corned beef

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

THE COUNTDOWN FOR MANNY PACQUIAO'S noontime steak luncheon at the Araneta Coliseum on July 2 was tolled yesterday, upon the boxing hero's return from the United States.

Pacquiao appeared ready for the scheduled feast, an inspirational rite before his loving countrymen.

After having honed up at the Wild Card Boxing Club off Vine Street in Hollywood, Pacquiao could be expected to climb the ring against Mexican Oscar Larios armed to the teeth.

While steaks are normally cut to thin slices with a sharp knife, Pacquiao is not leaving anything to chance.

He's showing up for the luncheon date wielding a mighty axe.

"*Hindi ko ipagpapalit kahit man sa lahat ng kayamanan itong karangalang bigay ng Mahal na Diyos na maging inspirasyon ng buong bayan*," Pacquiao told GMA-7 before winding up his shortened training in California.

Plainly translated, Pacquiao was assuring his countrymen he would give everything to repay their adoring support with a resounding win.

* * *

However, the scheduled steak luncheon could also turn messy.

Larios could prove to be real tough meat.

Not to displease Pacquiao, who had to protest when we first described Larios in this column as a form of recycled Mexican meat.

We had also been wrongly suspected of trying to wreck the promotion by baring the true merit of Larios, a rangy former two-time world champion.

Well, by that label—recycled steak—we meant that the visiting Mexican promises to be less juicy, if not totally dry or drained.

But, come to think of it, Larios could also come in truly tough, *malitid*, like dreaded carabeef.

* * *

Which momentarily pushed your reporter back to that dugout scene after Pacquiao lost his first fight against Erik Morales in March 2005.

It's like this. After being dealt a boxing lesson-cum-bloody beating, by Morales, Pacquiao ended up comparing the masterly Mexican ring legend to a big, brutish carabao.

Pacquiao's former close-in aide in California, Greg Asuncion of the LA Sheriff's Office, last time bared that his beaten former big boss, usually tough and fearless, manifested awe and desperation after that loss.

Pacquiao next trained doubly hard, had his fighting mechanism overhauled, then went on to baffle and stop Morales for the first time in a classy career.

* * *

Now, if Pacquiao sounds as though he has been training for Larios as hard as he had done against Morales, it's also to help market the $4 million card bankrolled by ABS-CBN.

Pacquiao needed to appear properly worried about Larios.

So far, the national boxing hero has appeared quite successful in this selling venture.

In fact, the venerable sportsman Nene Araneta, in whose Big Dome the July 2 will be staged, was caught wondering about Pacquiao's chances against the tall Mexican Monday night.

Señor Araneta was a main guest at the dinner for Miguel Torres Jr., son of the fabulous European wine king Don Miguel Torres of Vilafranca de Pinedes near Barcelona, at the Terry Selection in Makati Monday evening.

While Araneta was entertaining unfounded doubts, Morales, who is scheduled for a third encounter with Pacquiao in Las Vegas in November, picked the Pacman over Larios.

Veteran boxing journalist Ricardo Jimenez, now working as Top Rank spokesperson, also described Larios as beat up, or damaged goods.

Yes, the odds could go double-your-money for Pacquiao come fight time.

* * *

Still, Pacquiao has reason to worry. Strong as he could be, Pacquiao cannot be expected to show up with a full oxygen tank against Larios.

Not to say that Pacquiao's stamina would be good only for chasing a plate of corned beef across the table.

But if there promises to be a chink in Pacquiao's armor, this should be his stamina.

As he had to cram after checking in late at Wild Card in Hollywood, there's still the danger of Pacquiao running short of breath, as did happen in his fight against a Thai messenger in Taguig in December 2004.

Of course, Pacquiao honestly knows where Larios stands.

But, on a good day, the recycled Mexican could also prove gamy and truly tough.

National Pool listing starts

FILIPINO POOL PLAYERS ASPIRING FOR BERTHS in the 2006 World Pool Championship can now register to compete in the 2006 National Pool Championship set Aug. 15 to 20 at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium. The P2.2 million blue-ribbon 9-ball competition jointly is organized by the Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines (BSCP) and Raya Sports. Players can register with national pool coach Ramon Ancaja at the Rizal Memorial Billiards Center or at the Raya Sports office on the fifth floor of the PDAF building on Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City. Entry fee is P3,000. Four slots in the 2006 World Pool slated in November at the PICC is at stake.

SPORTSWATCH

60 fights in Makati 3-cocker

SOME 60 FIGHTS ARE ON TAP IN THE WTJ 3-COCK Derby starting at 5 p.m. today at the Makati Coliseum. A prize pot of P200,000 is at stake in the derby sponsored by B-Meg Derby Ace, said promoters Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co. Last Monday, the Jerby Makati entry of E. Mercado racked up five straight victories to rule the Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines 5-cock derby. However, Manny Pacquiao and Amor Salvanera (Super Pacman) still led the Cocker of the Year race.

GCAP grand finals today

THE GENTLEMAN COCKERS ASSOCIATION OF THE Philippines Cocker of the Year will finally be known today when the Grand Championship 5-Cock Derby gets under way at San Juan Coliseum. Sagupaan Complexor 3000 is exclusive sponsor of the 70-fight program. "This is GCAP's biggest event this year," said the GCAP's Patrick Antonio. "All roosters to be fielded are multi-winners." Jun Topacio of Cavite (JT Emerald, 29 points) lead Rep. Butch Pichay and Rey Briones' entry Spartan's Pichay by 1.5 points in the series. Antonio (Sagupaan Complexor 3000) shares third place at 26.5 with Gerry Ramos (Against All Odds) and Allan Siaco (JU AS WG Listana).

Spanish armada sails on

Switzerland, Ukraine keep World Cup bids alive

BERLIN—SPAIN MAY BE about to shake off its tag as underachiever after all.

A perennial disappointment at the World Cup, Spain trailed Tunisia for much of Monday's game before scoring three late goals for a 3-1 win and a place in the second round.

Switzerland and Ukraine each won to move a step closer to also advancing. Switzerland beat Togo 2-0, while Ukraine trounced Saudi Arabia 4-0.

SPAIN'S Fernando Torres celebrates scoring against Tunisia. REUTERS

Spain trailed in Stuttgart after an eighth-minute goal by Tunisia's Jahwar Menari and appeared set for a surprising loss before a 71st-minute equalizer by Raul Gonzalez and two goals from Fernando Torres made it the eighth team to reach the second round.

Defending champion Brazil, host Germany, Argentina, the Netherlands, England, Portugal and Ecuador are already into the last 16.

For his first goal, Torres collected a pass from the halfway line, took two quick touches and flicked the ball past the goalkeeper with the outside of his right boot from the edge of the area.

His second goal was a 90th-minute penalty awarded when a defender held him to stop him from jumping for a header. That goal made him the tournament's leading scorer with three.

"We had a lot of chances, we deserved to win," Spain coach Luis Aragones said. "But we were nervous."

Having beaten Ukraine 4-0 in its opener, Spain has six points in Group H. Its best World Cup showing was a fourth-place finish in 1950. Tunisia must beat Ukraine on Friday in its last game to have a chance of advancing.

"Just at the moment when Spain started to buckle we dropped our guard," Tunisia coach Roger Lemerre said.

Togo was eliminated and Saudi Arabia looks likely to join the African team.

Alexander Frei's performance in Dortmund helped Switzerland to a win that means it only needs a draw against South Korea in its last Group G game to guarantee a spot in the second round.

"We all know he can be even more efficient than we saw today, but he's coming back from a long injury period," Switzerland coach Koebi Kuhn said.

Frei gave Switzerland the lead in the 16th minute, heading in a pass from Tranquillo Barnetta. Frei missed a chance to score in front of an open net early in the second half, but Barnetta added another in the 88th with a 17-meter shot.

In Hamburg, Andriy Shevchenko got a header and Serhiy Rebrov scored one of the goals of the tournament in Ukraine's 4-0 win against Saudi Arabia, which was unable to muster a single shot on goal.

Andriy Rusol had already scored from a corner, the ball bouncing off his knee and into the goal, when Rebrov hit a 35-meter (yard) shot into the right-hand corner of the net in the 36th.

Shevchenko made it 3-0 in the 46th and, with four minutes remaining, set up Maxim Kalinichenko for the final goal that completed a turnaround from the team's 4-0 opening loss to Spain.

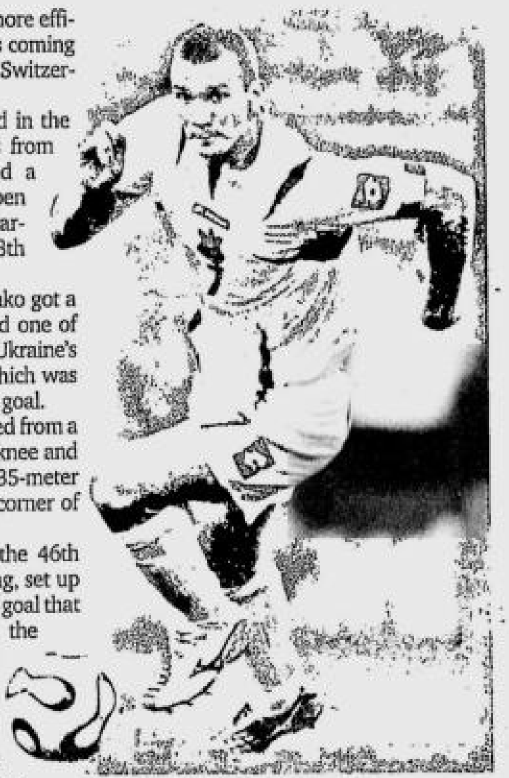
Australia forward Harry Kewell learned he could miss his team's crucial final group match against Croatia because he insulted German referee Markus Merk following Sunday's 2-0 loss to Brazil.

While Ghana has declared a half-day public holiday for Thursday's match against the United States that could secure a second-round berth, France fans were coming to terms with the realization that they may have seen the last of Zinedine Zidane.

The playmaker is retiring after the World Cup and, after a second yellow card in Sunday's 1-1 draw with South Korea, will miss France's last match against Togo.

Also, Germany's national team moved swiftly to dispel reports of a rift between star strikers Miroslav Klose and Lukas Podolski.

"Absolute rubbish," Klose said. "I only said that he was a little tense and I meant it in a positive way." *AP*



UKRAINE star Andriy Shevchenko gets ready to attack the Saudi Arabia defense in their group match. AP

FIFA WORLD CUP ON SPORTPLUS
12 a.m.—Ecuador vs. Garmany
1 p.m.—Sweden vs. England
4 p.m.—Paraguay vs. Trinidad & Tobago
10 p.m.—Ghana vs. USA (replay tomorrow @ 1 p.m.)

FIFA WORLD CUP GERMANY 2006

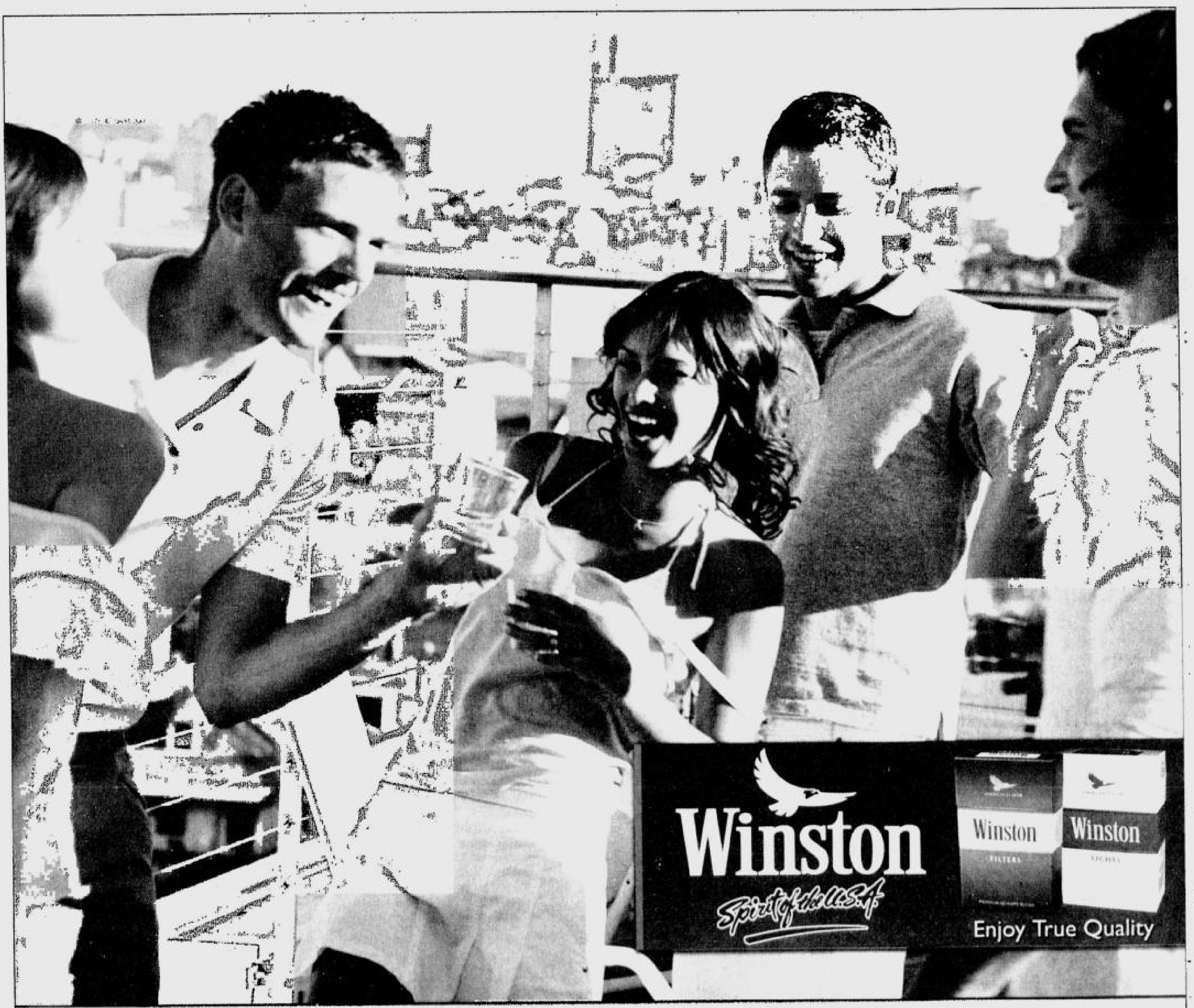
First Round

Team	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
GROUP A							
Ecuador	2	2	0	0	5	0	6
Germany	2	2	0	0	5	2	6
Poland	2	0	0	2	0	3	0
Costa Rica	2	0	0	2	2	7	0
GROUP B							
England	2	2	0	0	3	0	6
Sweden	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Trin. & Tobago	2	0	1	1	0	2	1
Paraguay	2	0	0	2	0	2	0
GROUP C							
Argentina	2	2	0	0	8	1	6
Netherlands	2	2	0	0	3	1	6
Ivory Coast	2	0	0	2	2	4	0
Serb. & Monte.	2	0	0	2	0	7	0
GROUP D							
Portugal	2	2	0	0	3	0	6
Mexico	2	1	1	0	3	1	4
Angola	2	0	1	1	0	1	1
Iran	2	0	0	2	1	5	0
GROUP E							
Italy	2	1	1	0	3	1	4
Czech Republic	2	1	0	1	3	2	3
Ghana	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
USA	2	0	1	1	1	4	1
GROUP F							
Brazil	2	2	0	0	3	0	6
Australia	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Croatia	2	0	1	1	0	1	1
Japan	2	0	1	1	1	3	1
GROUP G							
Switzerland	2	1	1	0	2	0	4
Korea Republic	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
France	2	0	2	0	1	1	2
Togo	2	0	0	2	1	4	0
GROUP H							
Spain	2	2	0	0	7	1	6
Ukraine	2	1	0	1	4	4	3
Tunisia	2	0	1	1	3	5	1
Saudi Arabia	2	0	1	1	2	6	1

INFOGRAPHICS/LOUIE BACANI

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS
Brazil 2, Australia 0;
France 1, South Korea 1;
Croatia 0, Japan 0

TODAY'S MATCHES
Togo vs Switzerland—Dortmund;
Spain vs Tunisia—Stuttgart;
Saudi Arabia vs Ukraine—Hamburg



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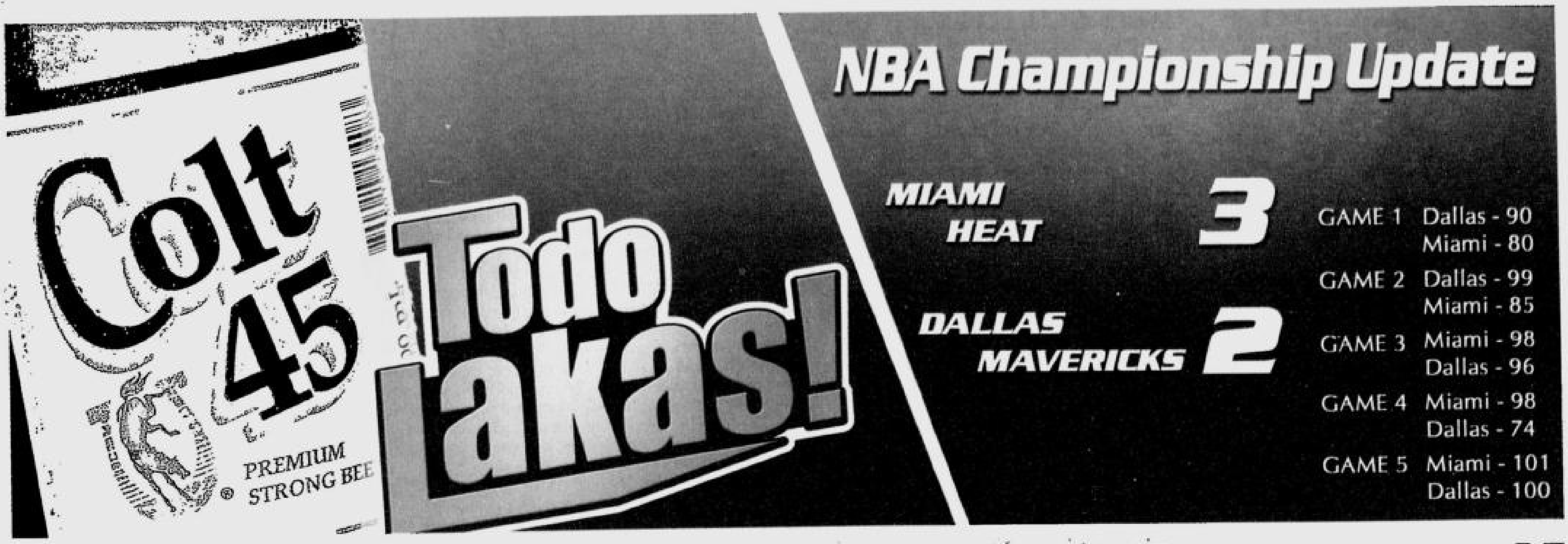


NBA Championship Update

MIAMI HEAT 3

DALLAS MAVERICKS 2

GAME 1 Dallas - 90
Miami - 80

GAME 2 Dallas - 99
Miami - 85

GAME 3 Miami - 98
Dallas - 96

GAME 4 Miami - 98
Dallas - 74

GAME 5 Miami - 101
Dallas - 100

Reeling Mavs find comfort in trip home

DALLAS—THE DALLAS MAVERICKS LEFT home last week with two wins and a swagger. They staggered back on Monday after three losses to the Miami Heat, teetering on the brink of elimination from the NBA finals.

But a big bunch of irrepressible fans reminded the Mavs that although their backs are against the wall, that wall is deep in the heart of Dallas—and in these finals, the homecourt advantage has been the only factor more important than Dwyane Wade.

DALLAS superstar Dirk Nowitzki gets ready for Game 6. REUTERS

The Mavericks' disastrous week in South Florida culminated on Sunday in the Heat's memorable 101-100 overtime win, featuring 43 points and two winning free throws from Wade. Dallas' flight home was dour and quiet—but the cheering, flag-waving faithful awaiting their plane snapped the Mavs out of a funk, hopefully just in time for Game 6 on Tuesday.

"That was the first smile I had all night, all morning," said Jason Terry, who scored 35 points in Game 5. "I saw the fans out there at the airport, and I knew it was home sweet home."

Terry speaks the truth about these finals: For the first time in 30 years, the home teams are unbeaten in the first five games. If Dallas still hopes to win its first championship, the Mavs must make it the first finals with seven home-team winners since 1955—or they'll watch Wade and Shaquille O'Neal celebrate the Heat's first title in Dallas.

"I can taste it, smell it, see it," said Miami center Alonzo Mourning, who persevered through 13 seasons and kidney disease in search of his first NBA championship. "It's going to take everybody being an active participant to do it, but I really feel that's going to happen Tuesday."

If it doesn't, a decisive Game 7 will be played on Thursday.

In a series between first-time finalists, it isn't psychologically surprising to see both teams leaning heavily on home cooking and crowd support. Both coaches have been dismayed by their teams' tentative play on the road.

Though Wade needed plenty of shots and nearly as many free throws, he has made his first indelible mark as a pro with 121 total points in the last three games. But he knows the Heat will need even more firepower to win in Dallas for the first time since 2002—and to beat an opponent that's lost just nine home games all season.

"We knew we didn't play any good games in Dallas," Wade said. "When you go on the road and you don't play good games, then you turn the ball over, it's hard to win. It's going to be very tough, but that's why we play this game—for these moments."

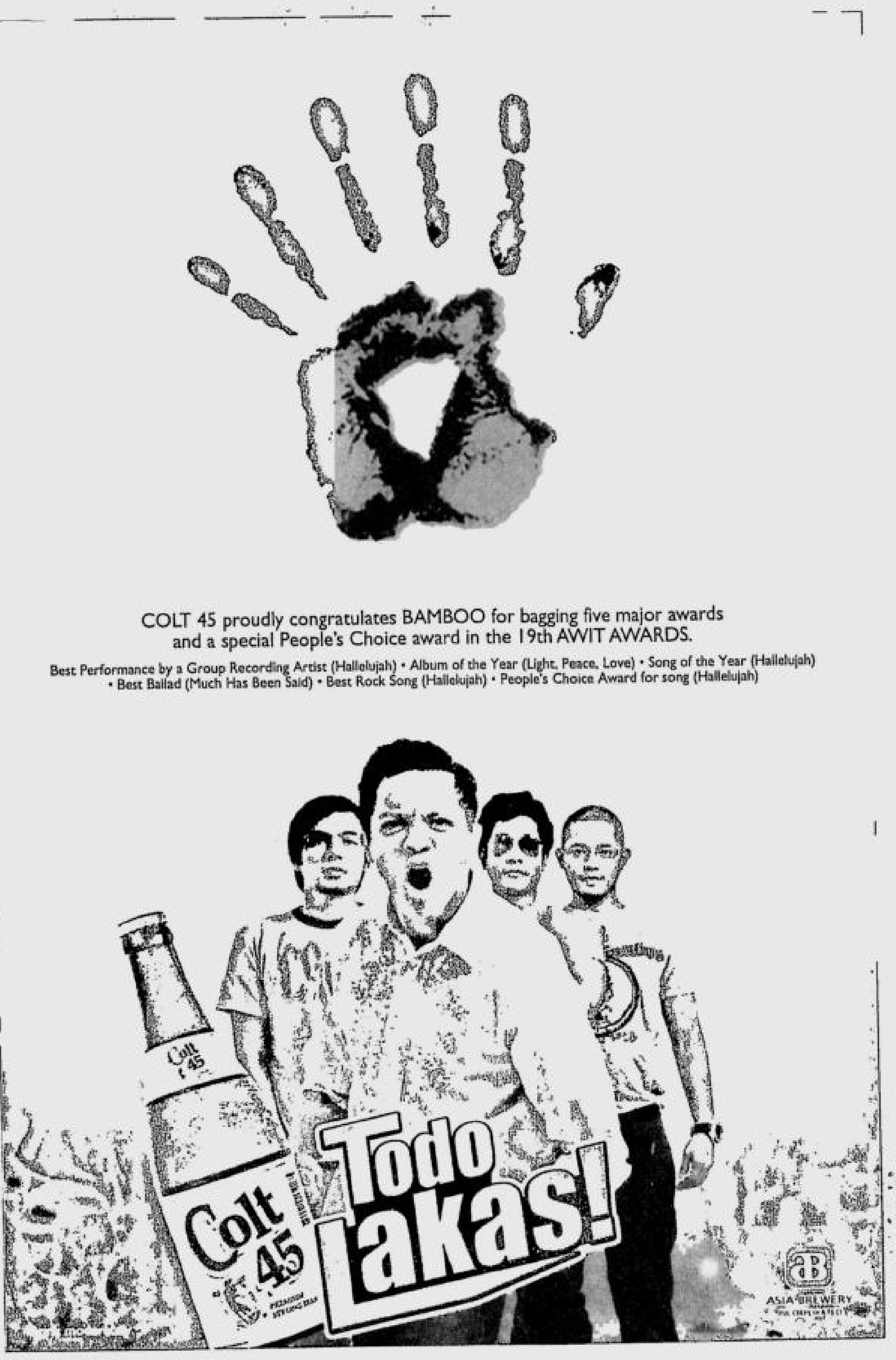
Dallas coach Avery Johnson's best adjustment for Game 6 simply might be his players' change into their home white shirts. What's more, top reserve Jerry Stackhouse will be back on the Mavericks' bench after sitting out Game 5 for his aggressive foul on O'Neal three nights earlier.

"Hopefully the energy of me being out the last few days can be used (defensively) on Dwyane," Stackhouse said. *AP*

- **NBA on TV:**

SOLAR SPORTS—Miami vs Dallas (9 a.m. live, 7:30 p.m. replay)

RPN-9—Miami vs. Dallas (9 a.m. live, 7 p.m. replay)



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Blue Eagle takes first step to NBA

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

MIKEE ROMERO ADMITS, WINNING his first-ever PBL championship is one of the highest points in his life.

It was pretty obvious. Two days after the championship, Harbour Centre's top honcho was still up on cloud nine. He said he was still savoring the triumph as he traced the short history of his team in the amateur league.

There was one time, he recalls, when he had to play the role of coach and trainer of the Portmasters.

For a billionaire like him to do this job speaks much of his deep passion for the sport of basketball.

***

Indeed, winning the PBL Unity Cup title provided one of the happiest moments for Mikee, he didn't even mind picking up the P300,0000 tab—the cost of the victory celebration at Gerry's Grill and an adjacent resto after the game.

Gerry's Grill was open to anybody that night who wanted to celebrate with Harbour Centre.

***

As colleague Rey Lachica said, the PBL series, in particular the last game, was a blockbuster.

Even cellphone snatchers had a field day. Mikee, who had deployed 30 security men at the stadium, almost lost his cellphone for good.

But one of the media men got a good look at the guy who came close to Mikee during the jubilation. The security men brought him to the CR to frisk him but found nothing.

He was about to be set free when Mikee heard a familiar ring tone. They traced the sound and found it coming from the crotch of the snatcher. The phone went into quarantine before it was returned to Mikee.

***

Japeth Aguilar fans will miss the 6'8 Ateneo Blue Eagle when the 2006 UAAP season opens this July.

Japeth is not coming back from Chicago where he joined his family some months back.

According to Ateneo head coach Norman Black, Japeth's parents Josie and Peter Aguilar, who played in the pros in the 80's, are trying to get Japeth into a Division 1 US NCAA school, the first step en route to a stint in the NBA, for most players.

***

"It is the Aguilars' dream for Japeth to be the first Filipino ever to play in the NBA, and they know that the best way to get there is to first play in a US NCAA Division 1 squad," Norman said. The Aguilars are eyeing Florida International University or South Dakota University.

***

While the loss of Aguilar came as a big blow to Ateneo, overall, Norman feels the Blue Eagles will be more effective this year than last.

"Of course with Japeth in the team, we would have been stronger, considering that he is the tallest cager in the UAAP, and one of the most promising."

Japeth is only 19 and still growing.

Tams, Lions dispute cage title

GAMES TODAY (*Tinga Stadium, Taguig*)
2 p.m.—PCU vs NU (for bronze)
3:30 p.m.—FEU vs SBC (for gold)

FAR EASTERN U AND SAN Beda College dispute the first Philippine Olympic Festival basketball crown today with the Tams favored to repeat over the Red Lions and cap their domination of the event at the Tinga Stadium in Taguig City.

The Tams, priming up for the UAAP cage wars outclassed the Red Lions, 93-80, in their first meeting last week then went on to beat National U and Philippine Christian U to complete a sweep of the elimination round.

But the Mendiola-based cagers, who ripped the Bulldogs, 69-55, last Saturday to gain the right to face the FEU squad for the crown, are expected to go flat out to spoil the Tams' bid in the tournament held under the auspices of the POC as part of the worldwide celebration of the Olympic movement and backed by Globe, Fontana Leisure Park, Petron, AMA Computer Univ. and Creativity Lounge.

Superal, Sales tie for Olympicfest golf

SUPERAL

JUNGOLFER WOLEN SUPERAL showed up his more experienced rivals by carding a two-over 74 for a share of the lead with Gary Sales at the start of the first Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) Festival golf tournament at the Villamor Golf Club yesterday.

The 13-year-old Superal, a Junior World champion, birdied the first two holes for 24 although he faltered coming home with a double-bogey marred 40.

Sales closed with back-to-back birdies for 38-36 in the 36-hole tournament serving as part of the celebration of the inaugural staging of POC Olympic Festival.

Former Singapore Amateur champion Michael Bibat failed to recover from a triple-bogey start and stood third with 80. Gino Bunyi shot an 81 for a share of fourth place with Joel Pilac.

ENTERTAINMENT
Editor Emmie G. Velarde
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Miriam says she wanted to have a baby this year

HOW SHE'S COPING: "I cry. I pray. I talk to trusted friends."

But it's not the right time, she concedes, 'not the right relationship'

By Nini Valera

MIRIAM QUIAMBAO ASSURED INQUIRER Entertainment that she could handle a one-on-one, but that she might refuse to answer the tough questions. But after a while, she was showing her pain unabashedly. When the tears broke, she turned away to compose herself. Finally, she asked to be excused.

Earlier, the former beauty queen had bravely faced reporters during a press con for her "homecoming" show on GMA 7—"Pinoy Meets World," to be co-hosted by her former "Extra Challenge" partner Paolo Bediones.

She recently separated from husband, Italian businessman Claudio Rondinelli, after almost three years of marriage and living in Hong Kong. Miriam, 31, has returned to Manila to revive her career as a television host.

She told the INQUIRER that she and Claudio, 36, had been talking about having children. "Personally," she said, "I was planning on having a baby this year. But it was just not the right time, not the right relationship."

Miriam talked candidly about how she was coping with the split-up. Technically, she said, they were still husband and wife. They had a church wedding in Manila and a civil wedding in Hong Kong, where Claudio is based. She said she gave up her career to live with him there.

As for the separation, Miriam said, the decision was mutual.

"We couldn't settle our differences," she said, adding that they just realized they were no longer who they used to be. But they were still friends, she claimed. "I was just talking to him yesterday. He's a very good man."

So what went wrong?

"We married prematurely, we believe,"

MIRIAM/ A2-3

OPENING TODAY

Pacquiao the Movie

Stars Jericho Rosales, Bea Alonzo, Bayani Agbayani, Jaclyn Jose

Directed by Joel Lamangan

More than the "rags-to-riches tale" of boxing champ Manny Pacquiao, this glossy bio-pic tells the "Filipino story" in these troubled times, director Lamangan says. "It is sad that our countrymen seem to be constantly searching for heroes," he notes. "We should all endeavor to become heroes in our own way." Star Rosales himself believes "everyone needs a hero, an inspiration." He dropped 10 pounds and reportedly trained relentlessly to play the Pac Man. He insists that this film is an unflinching look at the "man behind the hero ... it even tackles his defeats and weaknesses."

Kinsey

Stars Liam Neeson, Laura Linney, Chris O'Donnell, Peter Sarsgaard

Directed by Bill Condon

Dubbed "highly partisan," this critically acclaimed 2004 bio-pic chronicles the travails and triumphs of controversial Indiana University biologist Dr. Alfred C. Kinsey, who gained notoriety for his landmark works—"Sexual Behavior in the Human Male" (1948) and "Sexual Behavior in the Human Female" (1953). Michael Wilmington of the Chicago Tribune hails it as "a surprisingly entertaining" film, "a moving and often very funny look at an unlikely revolutionary." Roger Ebert of the Chicago Sun-Times agrees: "(Its) strength is finally in the clarity it brings to its title character. It is fascinating to meet a complete original, a person of intelligence and extremes." Sean Burns of the Philadelphia Weekly differs, dismissing it "a dirty movie with impeccable manners ... stiff, uninvolving ... shockingly

OPENING/ A2-6

MMFF's Magic 10

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE of the Metro Manila Film Festival has granted Star Cinema's request to pull out one of its two approved entries, the Vhong Navarro-Toni Gonzaga comedy flick, "Tanging Pamilya," from the December event.

The decision was finalized in a meeting on June 14.

Star Cinema's other entry, the Judy Ann Santos-Ryan Agoncillo drama "Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo," remains in the running.

The slot of "Tanging Pamilya" was originally given to a Unitel production, "Blackout," directed by Ato Bautista.

Tony Gloria, Unitel president and chief executive officer, "declined" the invitation because he said the company had decided on a Nov. 1 playdate for the suspense thriller topbilled by Robin Padilla.

Thus a slot was left open for "Super Noypi," produced by M&Q, which is also under Regal Entertainment.

Pleased

Lily Monteverde, Regal executive producer, told INQUIRER Entertainment in a phone interview that she was pleased with the outcome.

Monteverde is producing four out of 10 entries: "Super Noypi," "Zsazsa Zaturnnah," "Mano Po 5: Gua Ai Di" and "Shake, Rattle & Roll 8." Of this, she said, "It only shows our commitment to the industry."

Less than six months ago, as a result of a controversy over awards, Monteverde threatened to boycott this year's festival.

MMFF'S/ A2-2

'Classic Na, Orig Pa' film fest starts today

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

AWARD-WINNING MOVIES FROM the past and digital works from last year's Cinema One Originals are featured in the "Classic Na, Orig Pa," a film event starting today till Sunday at SM Megamall and SM City Manila.

The film festival commemorates the 12th anniversary of Cinema One, ABS-CBN's cable movie channel.

Acclaimed movies in the cable channel's catalogue are in the lineup—Ishmael Bernal's "Salawahan" and "Manila by Night," Laurice Guillen's "Salome" and Peque Gallaga's "Oro, Plata, Mata."

Commercial hits

Also in the list are commercial hits like Rory Quintos' "Anak," headlined by Vilma Santos; Joey Gosiengfiao's camp classic "Temptation Island," starring Dina Bonnevie; and Frank Gray Jr.'s "Omeng Satanasia," topbilled by Dolphy.

These three films are stored in the ABS-CBN Archives, according to Ronald M. Arguelles, Cinema One director of programming.

Apart from the archives, Arguelles said he tapped other sources for the festival. "From (filmmaker) Mike de Leon, I got copies of Lamberto Avellana's 'Portrait of an Artist as Filipino' and Lino Brocka's 'Maynila sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag.'" He also sought permission to include "Intramuros: The Walls of Hell," the work of three National Artists for Film.

"Gerry de Leon and Eddie Romero directed and Fernando Poe Jr. starred in this World War II movie," Arguelles said.

He also got permission to include another Brocka film,

'CLASSIC NA'/ A2-2

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03:00 PM	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	FEW SEATS	FEW SEATS	OPEN	OPEN
06:00 PM	FEW SEATS	OPEN	OPEN	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	OPEN
09:00 PM	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	FEW SEATS	FEW SEATS	OPEN	SOLD OUT	OPEN
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CENTERSTAGE
RESERVED
THE NUN
LAKE HOUSE
PACQUIAO THE MOVIE
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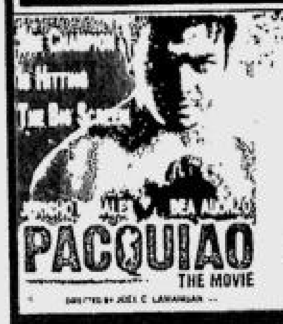

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CARS
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MMFF's Magic 10

From page A2-1

"I was very emotional at the time," Monteverde explained. "*Wala na 'yon.* (I'm over that.) I'm glad because the committee followed the guidelines. It just so happened that my film was next in line."

Orly Ilacad of Octo Arts/Canary/Virgin also has multiple entries—"Enteng Kabisote 3," "Karma" (formerly "Pagkagat ng Dilim") and "Short Time."

New producers have one entry each: CM Films' "Batang Maynila," starring Cesar Montano, and Violett Films' "Tatlong Baraha," headlined by Lito Lapid.

According to the MMFF execom, the Magic 10 includes three fantasy flicks ("Enteng," "Zsazsa" and "Super Noypi"), two action ("Bata" and "Tatlo"), two horror ("Karma" and "Shake"), two drama ("Mano Po 5" and "Kasal") and one comedy ("Short Time").

'Classic Na, Orig Pa'…

From page A2-1

"Bona," from Nora Aunor, its star and producer.

Arguelles related: "We tried to secure a video copy from the Cinematheque Française, with the help of Roger Garcia and Pierre Rissient." (Garcia is a Hollywood producer who has supported indie filmmakers like Raymond Red and Rico Ilarde, and Rissient is credited for introducing Brocka to Cannes.)

"But the video copy did not arrive on time, so we are using the best available video copy we have locally," Arguelles said. The copy is owned by a fan of Aunor's.

Sad reality

"The sad reality is that film prints of these movies are not available," said Arguelles. "For example, we cannot use our print of 'Omeng Satanasia' because the moviehouse projector might ruin it. Instead, we converted Betacam copies into DVD for projection on theater screens."

Products of the first Cinema One digital film festival—Mark Gary's "Sandalang Bahay," Liza Cornejo's "Sitak," Topel Lee's "Dilim," Sigfried Barros Sanchez's "Ang Anak ni Brocka," Dennis Marasigan's "Sa North Diversion Road" and Jon Red's "Anak ng Tinapa"—are also having a return engagement during the five-day festival.

Miriam says . . .

From page A2-1

Miriam said. "I wouldn't want to [blame] either of us ... it's just that we have different interests. *Sobrang daming* differences."

Before the wedding, they had known each other for only a year. During that period, she said, "We would see each other only one weekend in a month. *Kaya nga* premature."

Miriam admitted that she "loved the lifestyle" as Claudio's wife in cosmopolitan Hong Kong.

"It was fantastic," she said. "We [also] traveled a lot."

In the second year of marriage, Miriam became "very, very homesick" (INQUIRER caught up with her last year in Hong Kong. She said she had been fighting bouts of depression by taking intermittent trips to Manila.)

Her parents have come to accept the situation, Miriam said. "In the beginning, of course, they were concerned. But they saw how unhappy we both were."

"There were so many factors (that led to our separation)," she said. "*Sobrang dami...*"

And there seems to be as much to settle at this point. "We're still talking about ... things," Miriam said. She did not elaborate.

How was she mending her broken heart?

The reply was swift and succinct: "I cry. I pray. I talk to friends and people I trust. I'm very thankful that God is still taking care of me, that in spite of this ... He has given me a job. Probably I needed to learn these big lessons. My philosophy in life is to focus not on my mistakes but on my learnings. Otherwise, I won't get anywhere. I have to move on."

She rejected the possibility of another relationship at this point. "The relationship I would [be inclined to] nurture [now] would be with myself."

Shortly after the one-on-one, Miriam rushed to the airport to catch a plane for India, where she was to interview former Miss Universe Sushmita Sen for "Pinoy Meets World."

MIRIAM in Hong Kong last year, happy to be with friends, Ethel and Paolo

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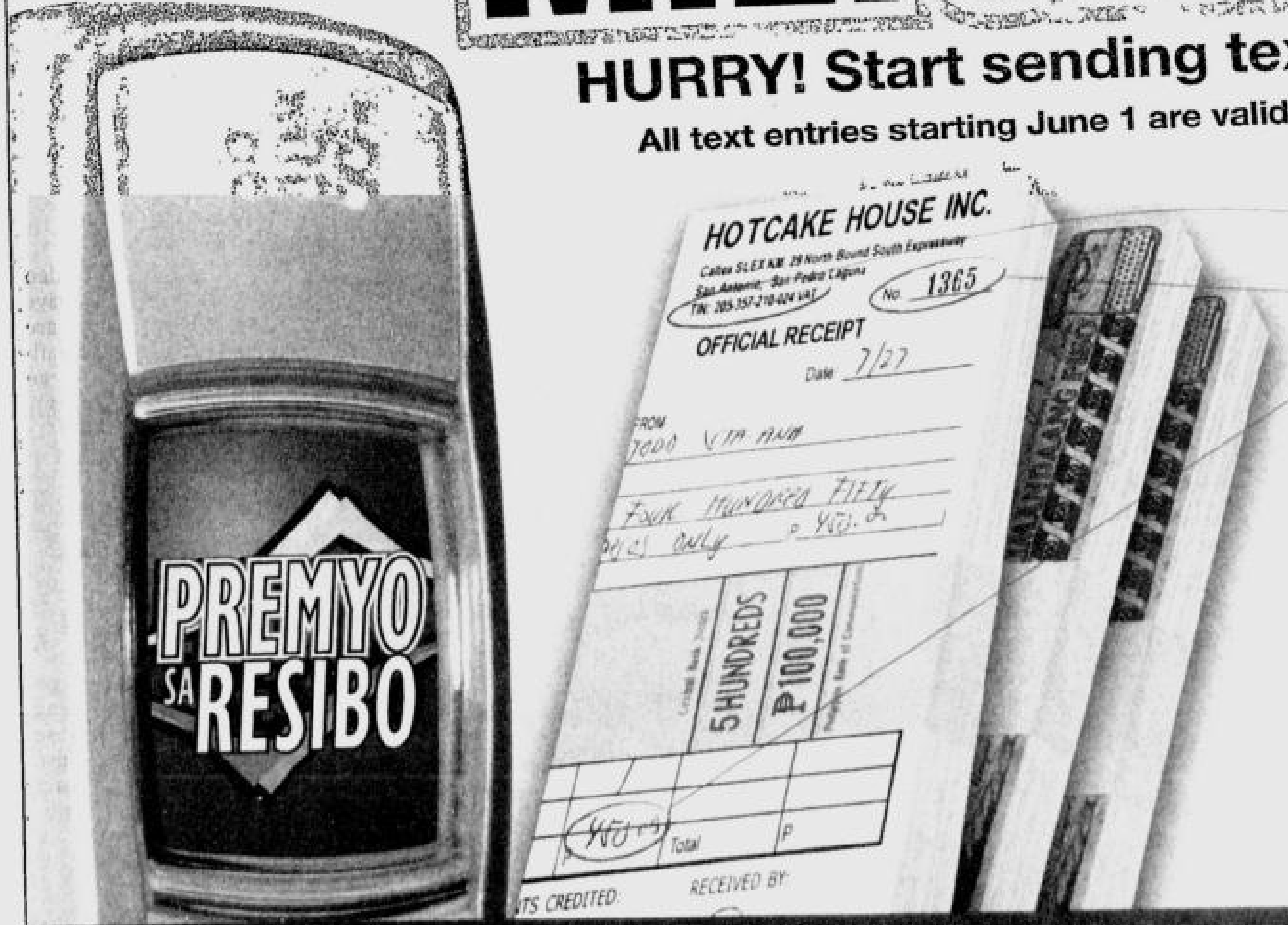

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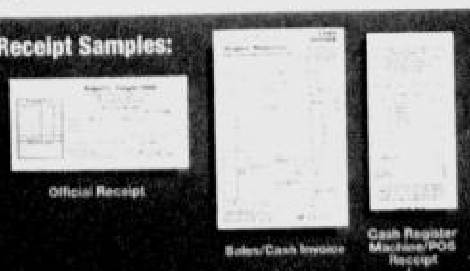

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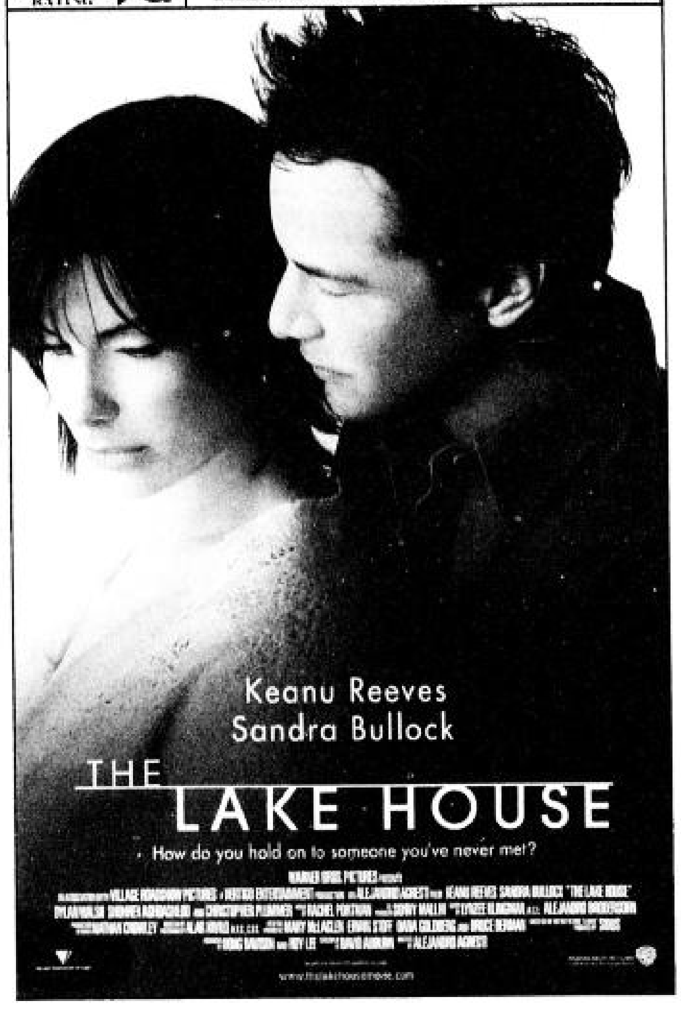
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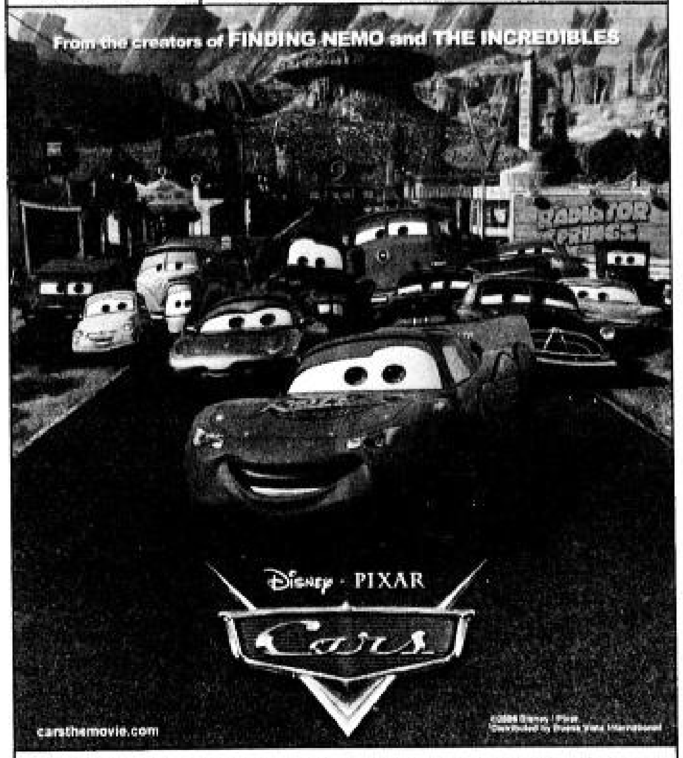
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		4 KINSEY	5 CARS	6 SCARY MOVIE 4	7 THE SECRET OF THE CODE
GB1	GREENBELT 1	1 THE LAKE HOUSE	2 SCARY MOVIE 4		
GB3	GREENBELT 3	1 THX THE LAKE HOUSE GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX SCARY MOVIE 4 GUARANTEED SEATS		
		3 KINSEY GUARANTEED SEATS	4 GARFIELD 2 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 CARS GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX SCARY MOVIE 4	2 CARS		
		3 THE LAKE HOUSE	4 THE NUN	5 PACQUIAO	
ACC	AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 SCARY MOVIE 4	2 PACQUIAO	3 HILLS HAVE EYES	4 THE FAST & THE FURIOUS: TOKYO DRIFT
M2	MARKET! MARKET!	1 SCARY MOVIE 4	2 THE NUN		
		3 KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO	4 PACQUIAO	5 THE LAKE HOUSE	

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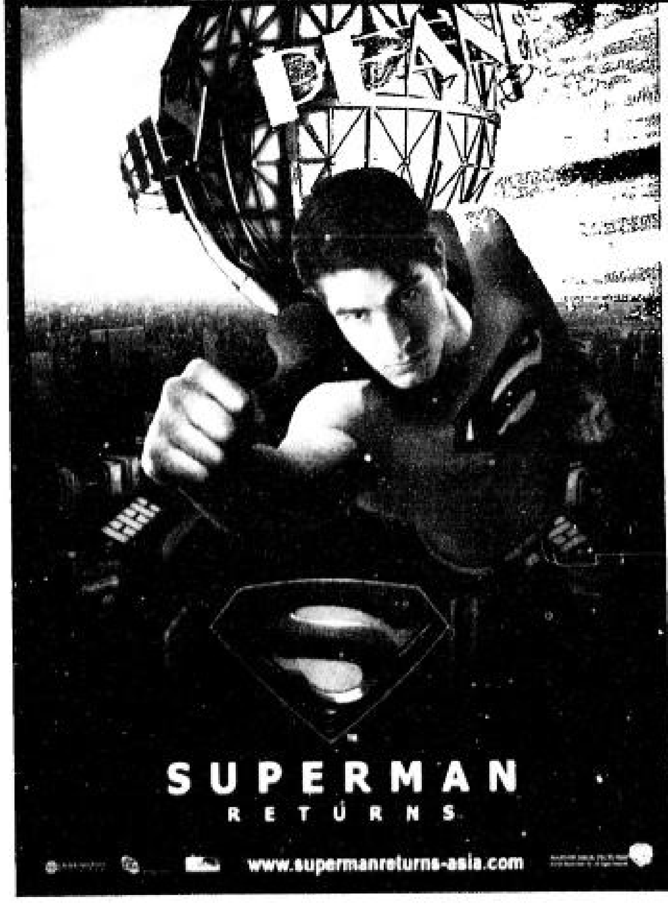
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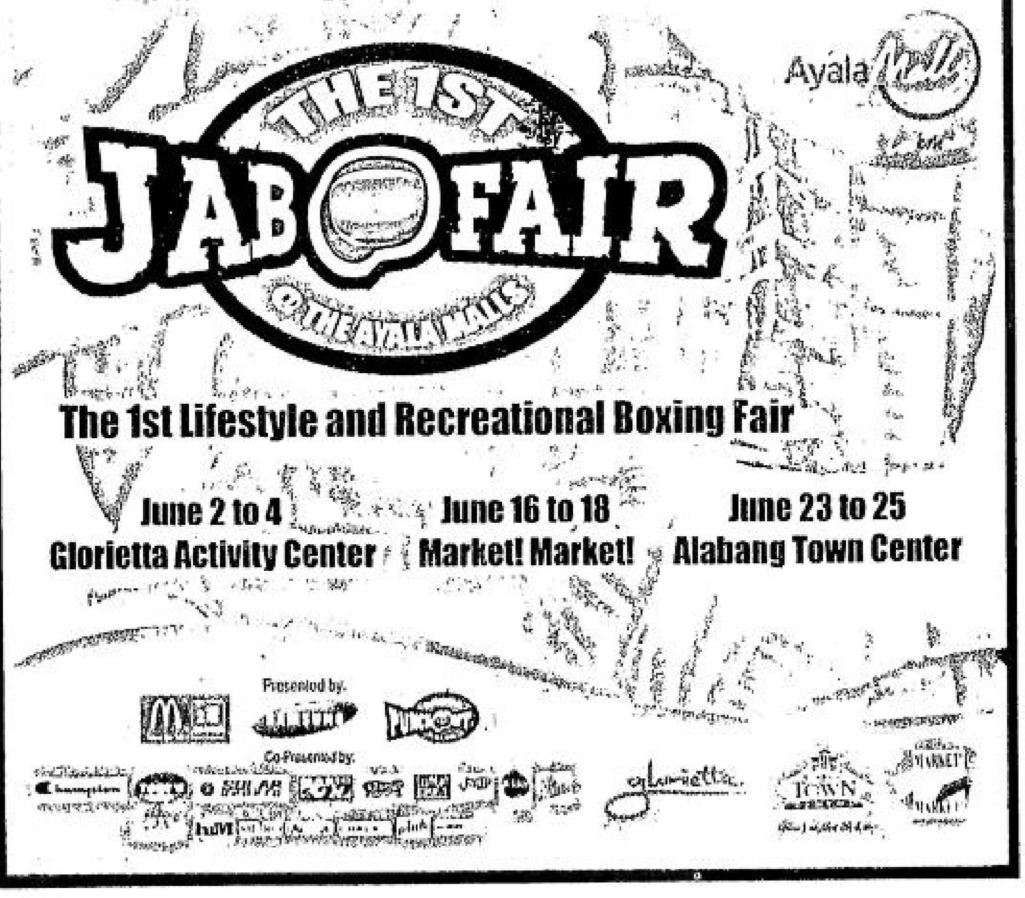
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THE ORIGINAL Minstrels on stage again (from left): Annette Belen, Rene Puno, Eileen Dolina, Ding Mercado, Aida Balmaceda, Eugene Villaluz, Louie Reyes, Ray-An Fuentes, Mei Ling Gozun. Not in photo is founding member Cesar dela Fuente.

Sweet nostalgia with the ever-New Minstrels

By Pocholo Concepcion
Contributor

REVIEW

LOUIE REYES AND RAY-AN Fuentes stood out from among five generations of the long disbanded New Minstrels, which came together in a one-night gig dubbed "The Ultimate Reunion Concert" Friday at the Aliw Theater in the Star City Complex, Pasay.

Not to say that this was an occasion to show off who was best, because watching the New Minstrels live with some three dozen former members—a good number of whom became famous as solo acts—could be an experience in talent overload.

Who's who?

..A quick rundown of some of the vocalists who sent a good-size crowd reeling in nostalgia that night is enough to take one's breath away—Eugene Villaluz, Ding Mercado, Annette Belen, Eileen Dolina, Aida Balmaceda, Joey Albert, Louanne Cuenco, Bobby Domingo, Joseph Olfindo, Juno Henares, and Patti Manuel. There were many others whose names we failed to recall but whose presence definitely mattered.

In fact, many members of the audience kept themselves busy identifying each performer as the original lineup went through the memorable routines that made the group the toast of the 1970s night club/hotel lounge scene in Metro Manila. The club's names were conspicuously hung onstage as backdrop—Wells Fargo, El Camarote, Cusco, Katchina, Alibi Bar and Tavern—all closed now, except the latter, which reopened recently in Greenbelt 3.)

The '70s produced the best music of all, Mercado declared, but the group then proceeded to sing "My Girl," the Temptations' first No. 1 hit, released in March, 1965, and the Fifth Dimension's "Up, Up and Away," released in 1967? Oh, well—whether it was due to a faulty script or faulty memory was forgotten by the time Fuentes began flashing his Pinoy "soul brudah" persona, and Reyes started to blur the lines that separated her and Aretha Franklin.

The New Minstrels epitomized the quintessential cover band.

STANDOUTS. Ray-An Fuentes and Louie Reyes

But this cover band's vocalists went a notch higher, taking on innovative interpretations and delightful choreography.

Another distinction was the group's role in reviving interest in classic Filipino ballads such as "Buhat" and novelty tunes like "Balut." These were sung with pride and zest at the concert.

Praiseworthy

The second generation members (billed during their incarnation as Something Special) proved themselves worthy of admiration, too. This batch became popular at the height of the so-called English OPM boom that upscale FM radio stations like 99.5 RT successfully promoted in the '80s.

The third generation had Albert and Henares in its lineup. Albert reminded us of Stevie Nicks in "Whenever I Call You Friend," while Henares was impressive in a cover of Manhattan Transfer's "Shaker Song," never mind if his flabby tummy was bouncing along with the music.

The spokesperson for the fourth and fifth generations lamented that they never had an original song written for them. They compensated for this lack by their flare for adopting the dance music of the '80s and '90s. Their act demonstrated how Pinoy show bands became a hot ticket in hotels worldwide.

The reunion gig stretched for almost two hours, highlighted by medleys featuring an all-men New Minstrels doing Barry Manilow—an otherwise corny part but which nevertheless drew cheers, owing to the sheer variety of vocal talents. Not to be outdone, the women dished out their own medley, of Sergio Mendes material. This was one of those moments when Reyes was simply exhilarating.

But the highest point was when Fuentes sang parts of "Umagang Kay Ganda," as though to remind everyone he is still as Pinoy as this average guy waiting for the jeepney with his girlfriend on a rainy midnight in June 2006.

Terror and courage in the skies

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

'United 93' is beyond 'stranger than fiction'

REVIEW

IT'S ONE OF THOSE RARE INSTANCES when nothing prepares you for the inevitable—even when you know the story's ending, because it's just beyond stranger-than-fiction.

"United 93" carefully recreates and reenacts the final moments of the doomed passengers who stood together to prevent a quartet of terrorist hijackers from destroying another American landmark during 9/11. Information gleaned from cockpit recordings, cellular and air phone calls, as well as testimonies of victims' relatives solidly reinforce the moving story of unexpected heroism and unthinkable, real-life tragedy.

Foreboding

One of the movie's press kit contents, a blurb-filled poster of the movie, shows a negative space-silhouette of a plane, surrounded by a monochromatic mosaic of symbolic objects and the many actors who played the passengers, crew and terrorists. The composition of that collage sums up the foreboding mood of the film nicely. Most of the faces in that fateful flight are an eclectic mix of individuals, ordinary people who were yanked out of their quiet worlds and have become emotionally conflicted together in the face of sudden adversity.

It's fitting, then, that "United 93" opted to cast unknowns for the parts, and real people as traffic control center officers and personnel. With that added touch of realism, the endeavor proceeds without unnecessary distractions, from whatever biases role association might present.

Director Paul Greengrass (of "The Bourne Supremacy") takes available material and fills in some blanks logically, creating a respectful, real-time representation of the drama, which moves from busy air traffic nerve centers to the airborne United Airlines Flight 93.

Voyeuristic

This can make one feel nauseous, not only because the camera becomes deliberately jumpy and restless later, but also because it provides a disturbingly voyeuristic view of the tragedy as it unfolded.

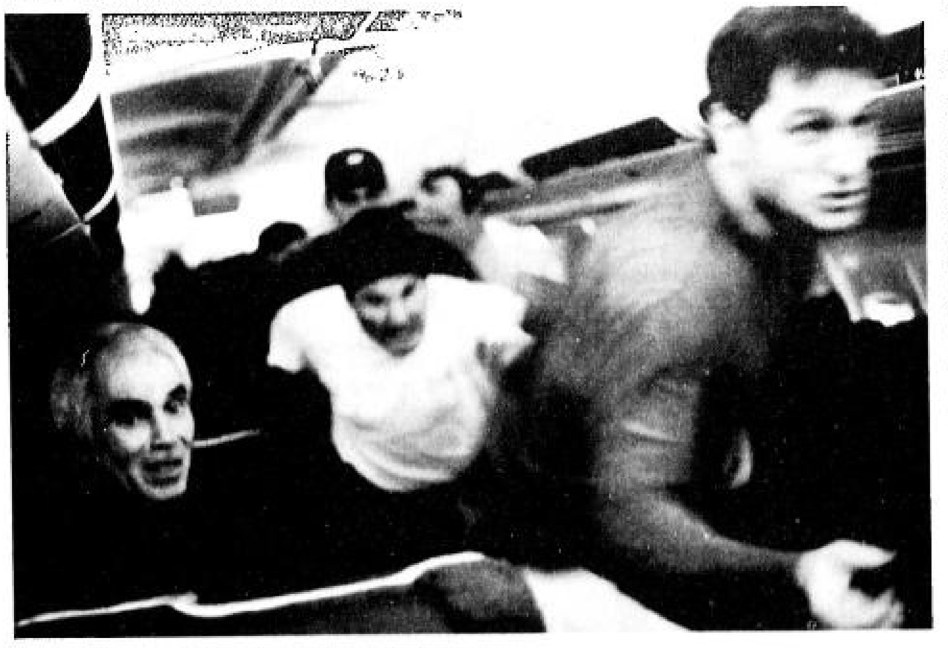
It's especially devastating to witness many of the 40 passengers, who have more or less accepted their fates, make final phone calls to their loved ones. It's quite hard to look away and stay calm in your seat when all hell breaks loose.

It's as sickening to hear the cacophony of screams when the plane was plunging towards Shanksville, Pennsylvania, as it is to hear nothing when the screen fades to black soon after.

Powerful

It's depressing, undoubtedly, but "United 93" forces you to think about how life has changed, almost five years after the unbelievable events of that day. This powerful effort knows its bounds, and gives an organized, understandable overview of the heart-rending ordeal.

It's really a rare thing, when such a finely made film can make one feel awful after seeing it.



CAST of unknowns keeps this 9/11 movie real.

Will telenovela network catch on in America?

NEW YORK—MY NETWORK TV, A NEW haven for prime-time soap operas, represents one of the most intriguing rolls of the dice that the American TV business has seen in several years.

It will test whether there is an English-language marketplace for telenovelas, the steamy, short-run stories that are all the rage in Latin America and the programming foundation for Univision, the nation's most popular Spanish-language network.

"There's always been a reluctance on the part of American television to recognize formats from around the world," said Jack Abernethy, CEO of Fox Television Stations. "That reluctance kept things like 'American Idol' off the air for a long time while it was popular in England. It kept 'Survivor' off the air.

"There's been this notion that we're somehow more sophisticated and that these kind of plot lines aren't going to work here," he said. "This is going to prove them wrong."

Out of necessity

My Network TV was created by the Fox station group out of necessity, not design.

Executives from CBS Corp. and Warner Bros. Entertainment surprised the industry in January by announcing they would fold their money-losing WB and UPN networks, and create the new CW network by combining the assets of both.

Abernethy suddenly had a problem. Fox owned nine UPN affiliates, reaching 26 percent of the nation's viewers, in big cities such as New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and Washington. He had no idea what they were going to put on the air in only eight months.

He and his colleagues considered several alternatives, scouring the market for reruns of old network hits. Running syndicated fare like "Dr. Phil" in prime time was one possibility.

"It became apparent that the solution was right under our nose," Abernethy said.

Corporate cousin Twentieth Television was already developing telenovela projects for either sale in the syndication market or as a hedge if UPN folded, he said. They decided to make this the focus of a new network.

Other stations left in the lurch by the CW quickly signed on to the concept. Through last week, My Network TV had stations reaching 85 percent of the US viewing public in the fold. (Boston has no My Network TV affiliate yet, but negotiations are continuing.)

Like daytime soap

My Network TV will "strip" its stories just like daytime soap operas, with a new episode five nights a week. The dramas will run in 13-week increments—four separate stories under the "Desire" umbrella at 8 p.m. and four stories under "Secret Obsessions" at 9 p.m.

The network has purchased scripts that aired successfully overseas, like the "Table for Three" story that debuts this fall. The saga of two brothers who fall in love with the same beautiful woman, while each man is being chased by the Mafia, was a big hit when it aired in Colombia.

Some of the stories are familiar for other reasons. "Dangerous Love" will remind some viewers of "Romeo & Juliet," while "Watch Over Me," about a rich man who hires security to protect his fiancee, has elements of the movie "My Bodyguard," said Bob Cook, president of Twentieth Television.

"There are some very popular telenovelas that we did not option," Cook said. "The reason is because they were too corny, too over-the-top, too overstated and didn't adapt well to American sensibilities. You have to be smart about that."

Attractive unknowns

Most of the casts are attractive unknowns, although there are few familiar faces sprinkled in. Bo Derek plays a powerful fashion icon in one story, while Sean Young portrays a woman who waits two decades to get revenge on a husband who abandoned her in another. Maria Conchita Alonso, who has starred in 11 telenovelas, will be featured in a My Network TV story, too.

With the stories moving more quickly than daytime soaps, My Network plans to offer weekend summaries to help viewers keep up. *David Bauder, AP*

OPENING TODAY

From page A2-1

bland." The movie's "uncut" version runs exclusively at the Ayala Malls Cinemas.

The Nun

Stars Anita Brien, Belén Blanco, Cristina Piaget, Natalia Decenta

Directed by Luis de la Madrid

This "cutting-edge thriller" from Spain follows six schoolgirls, 17 years after their involvement in the "disappearance" of a sadistic nun (Piaget). They thought they've escaped their dormitory tormentor, but the nun's malevolent spirit returns to torture them again. Horrorexpress.com describes it as "mostly a success. It has a solid story combined with [polished] production [values] … One of the things (it) does so well is combine Asian horror aesthetics … with Spanish religious tradition." Bloody-disgusting.com raves, "The editing is brisk and (it) never drags." That's probably because first-time filmmaker De la Madrid worked as editor in films like "Darkness," "The Machinist" and "The Devil's Backbone."

Secrets of the Code

Directed by Jonathan Stack

Those who can't get enough of the "The Da Vinci Code" can check out this "feature film documentary" that "explores many of the same issues" tackled in Dan Brown's contentious bestseller. Based on a popular page-turner by Dan Burstein, this docu was premiered at the prestigious Tribeca Film Festival in New York. Burstein calls the film version "its own unique, emotional, visual and intellectually thought-provoking journey into (a) world of alternative gospels, hidden messages and secret and sacred knowledge." A two-time Academy Award nominee, Stack also showcased this film at the Hot Docs docu festival in Toronto. Burstein remarks that "Stack's interpretation of these issues" has resulted in a movie that is "entertaining and independent."

Scary Movie 4

Stars Anna Faris, Regina Hall, Carmen Electra, Michael Madsen

Directed by David Zucker

Cindy Campbell, the "ever-naïve heroine" of the "Scary" series (Faris), gives up broadcast news for a career in home healthcare and encounters horrific plane crashes, aliens, rappers, serial killers, even Oprah. Jami Bernard of the New York Daily News complains that the "'Scary' franchise is overstaying its welcome … There's only so much humor left to wring from … 'Brokeback Mountain' or the matted-hair fetish of the Japanese horror genre." Colin Covert of the Minneapolis Star Tribune opines that "the six-year-old franchise is showing its age … but there are still enough solid jokes to outweigh the clunkers." Joey Guerra of the Houston Chronicle is exasperated: It's "an unruly, unmitigated mess. Instead of concentrating on lampooning one specific movie or genre, [it] jumps all over the movie map."

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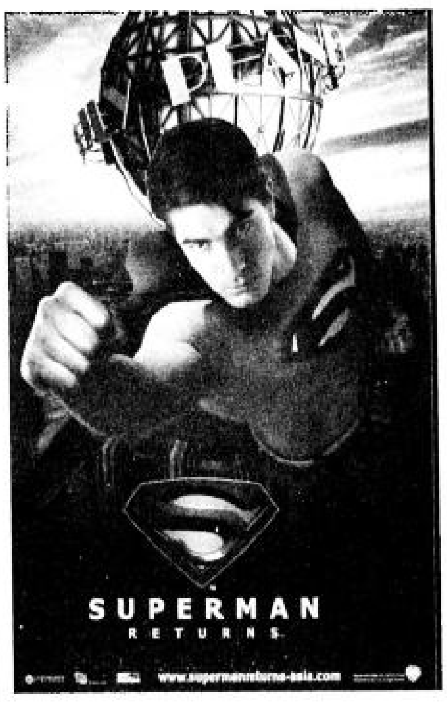

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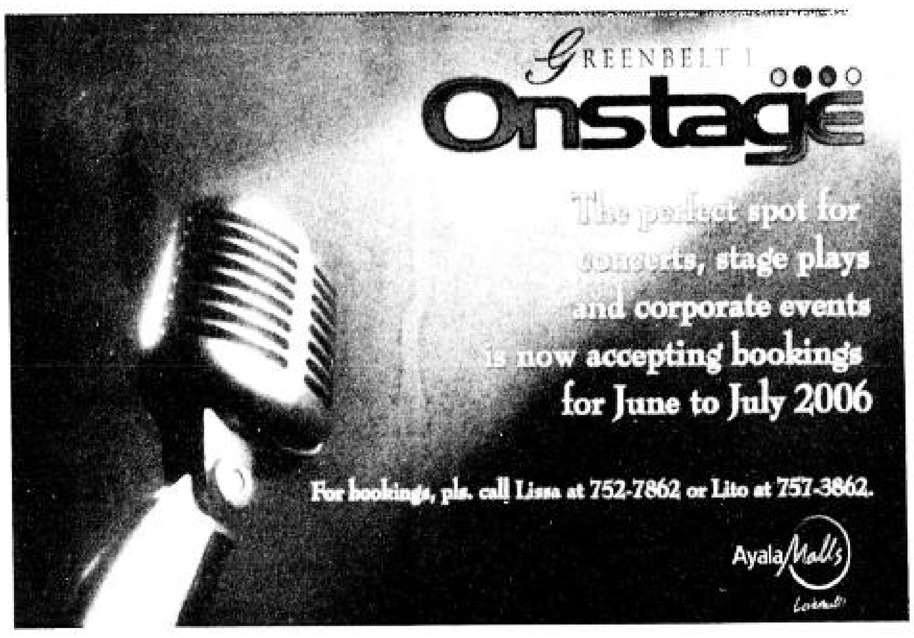

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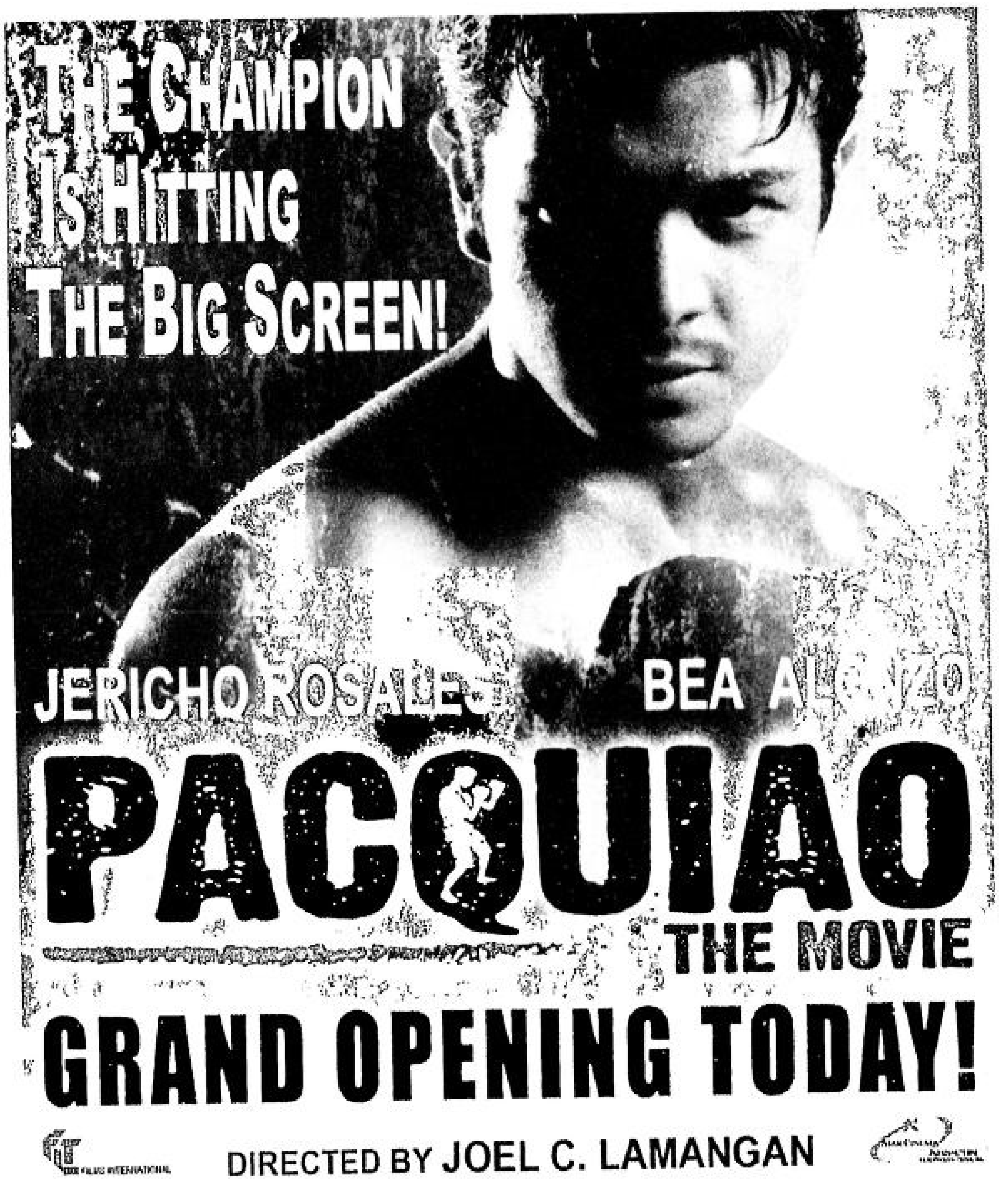

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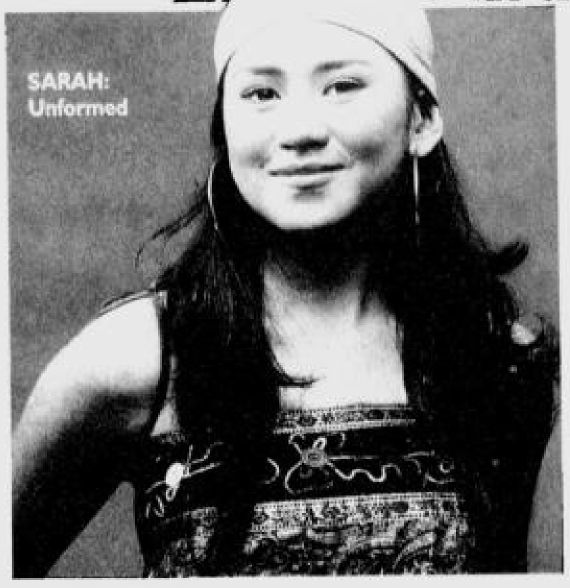
AiAi: Not too bad



SARAH: Unformed

Why Ai-Ai & Sarah fail to pass muster as dramatic actresses

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

FOR WEEKS NOW, THE NEW TELEnovela, "Bituing Walang Ningning," has been trying to transform teen singer Sarah Geronimo and comedienne AiAi delas Alas into believable and empathetic dramatic actresses. To date, however, the show has been unsuccessful in its earnest endeavor, so it might be instructive to figure out why.

Basically, good dramatic performance should be felt, insightful, perceptively emotional, and naturally expressive. AiAi doesn't do too badly in some of these areas, because she knows how to pare away distracting fripperies, and get to the core of her character, and the scene at hand.

Her problem, however, is that her dramatic persona is simply not as interesting and textured as her comedic side. So, we wonder why she's bothered to change her performance "attack."

Sure, the thespic challenge is there, and it's good to do something new, but if the resulting performance isn't particularly memorable, it doesn't seem to be worth the major change of pace, does it?

The bottom line is: AiAi is uniquely effective as a comedienne, so her dramatic performance, should at least be similarly arresting. On "Bituing Walang Ningning," however, her thespic paring down has resulted in a merely correct portrayal—and that simply isn't good enough.

To be sure, the melodramatic nature of TV soaps contributes to the problem, since it prevents most performers from coming up with truly deep and intense characterizations.

So, if AiAi wants to impress viewers with her ability to do dramatic scenes, she shouldn't do so in a soap, but in a dramatic film, where greater depth and texture are more achievable.

As for Sarah Geronimo, her problem is that she's too unformed to come up with an insightful portrayal this early in her thespic career. Not all the highlighting and underscoring in the world can imbue their performance with genuine insight and excitement.

Sarah is a dutiful performer, but there's much more to good acting than following instructions. In fact, the best actors are those who know the characters they're playing so well that they can go out on a limb, taking risks that pay off because they understand their roles so completely.

This, Sarah doesn't have, so she tends to play it ingratiating and cute, and to push her emotions, thus resulting in an artificial and predictable portrayal.

This is a pity, since her character is the telenovela's linchpin. As a result, we can appreciate the series' plot and character development in abstraction, but not as a flesh-and-blood experience that can truly move us. Now, that's a major deficiency, and Sarah must dig deeper to make up for it.

Orlando Bloom

In "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest," Orlando Bloom reprises his role as the dashing Will Turner.

In the sequel, Jack Sparrow (Johnny Depp) has huge problems that interfere with the wedding plans of Turner and Elizabeth Swann (Keira Knightley).

They are forced to join Jack as he tries to find a way out of his "blood debt" to the legendary Davey Jones, or else be doomed to eternal damnation and servitude in the afterlife.

Meryl Streep

In her latest film, "The Devil Wears Prada," Meryl Streep drops the dowdy look that she's assumed in many of her dramatic starrers. This time around, she plays a sophisticated doyenne of the world of haute couture. Anne Hathaway also stars.

Dr. Phil

TV's Dr. Phil in a movie? That's right. Television's resident no-nonsense psychiatrist turns in a funny cameo in the spoof comedy, "Scary Movie, 4."

In one scene, one of his feet is in chains, and he is forced to cut off his foot in order to free himself. Unfortunately, he cuts through the wrong foot!

Dr. Phil shot his big scene with Shaquille O'Neal, and says he had such a blast acting in his first movie that he can't wait to face the movie camera again.

> There's so much more to good acting than just following instructions

Dream can't carry GMA-7 shows

By Daxim L. Lucas
Business

THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY Office (IPO) has barred Antonio "Tonyboy" Cojuangco's Dream Broadcasting System from carrying the signals of GMA Network Inc. to its subscribers, the broadcast firm said on Monday.

In a statement, GMA Network said the IPO issued a temporary restraining order (TRO) against the Philippine Multi-Media System Inc., also known as Dream Broadcasting System, "enjoining it from airing, transmitting, re-broadcasting, and carrying GMA's shows or programs through direct to home (DTH) satellite signals and direct broadcast satellite (DBS) service."

The TRO stemmed from a complaint filed by GMA, alleging that Dream carried its signals without permission.

"Dream Broadcasting System, in its direct to home services from July 1, 2002, was continually receiving and re-broadcasting GMA Network's television shows and programs without the authority or consent of GMA Network," the statement said.

Exclusive right

According to the complaint, the network "enjoys the sole and exclusive right to transmit and to broadcast its radio and television programs consisting of both audio (sound) and video (visual) material, including the right to prohibit its unauthorized re-broadcast, recording and use thereof."

The IPO ordered the issuance of the TRO on June 1, upon GMA Network's filing of a P200,000 cash bond. It is expected to set a hearing on GMA's application for the issuance of a writ of preliminary injunction, which will permanently prevent Dream from carrying GMA shows.

According to GMA, Dream also committed a direct violation of National Telecommunications Office (NTC) Memorandum Circular No. 10-10-2003, which prohibits the "reception, distribution and/or transmission by a direct broadcast satellite (DBS) service operator ... of any television signal without any agreement with or authorization from the program/content providers."

Before it filed the complaint, GMA Network said it demanded that Dream stop carrying, transmitting, and re-broadcasting GMA's programs, and to enter into a carriage and distribution agreement with the network.

"Dream Broadcasting disregarded GMA's demands and continued its unauthorized re-broadcast of the network's programs," the statement said, prompting the network to resort to legal remedies.

Nicole & Keith may wed next week

THE WEDDING could be held in a little chapel near her family home.

SYDNEY—OSCAR-WINNING ACtress Nicole Kidman arrived in Sydney on Monday amid speculation she and fiance country music star Keith Urban will marry next weekend in a church near her family home.

Australian television showed Kidman leaving a private jet in the early hours of Monday, while local media reported she and Urban were tipped to tie the knot at a Catholic church in Sydney at the weekend.

No sighting

Kidman's publicist was not available for comment and there were no reports on Urban's whereabouts.

The couple ended months of speculation last month when they announced they were engaged. Kidman and Urban, both aged 38, were brought up in Australia.

Local media, along with the Catholic church's news website www.catholic.org, have speculated that Kidman and Urban will marry on June 25.

"To be frank I do not know whether she has arrived. I knew she was coming," said Sydney Jesuit Father Paul Coleman, a longtime friend of the Kidman family.

Asked by Reuters whether he would be performing the wedding and whether it would be this weekend, Coleman said: "Well at the moment I hope that will be okay. I have no details yet. I have to wait to be told. I am not allowed to say much."

Coleman—chaplain at Mary Mackillop Chapel in North Sydney, a small church a short stroll to Sydney Harbor—said his chapel had not been booked for a wedding this weekend, but added that it may be too small.

The Kidman family lives a few suburbs north of the chapel, and the parish is where Nicole and her sister went to school.

In January, Kidman mentioned the chapel as a possible wedding venue, said the Catholic News Service. *Michael Perry, Reuters*

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CARS 12::20/2:45/5:10 X-MEN 3 7:40/10:00	THE LAKE HOUSE 1:20/3:30/5:40/7:50/10:00	THE FAST & THE FURIOUS 3 1:00/3:15/5:30/7:45/10:00	THE FAST & THE FURIOUS 3 12:05/2:25/4:45 THE LAKE HOUSE 7:00/9:10

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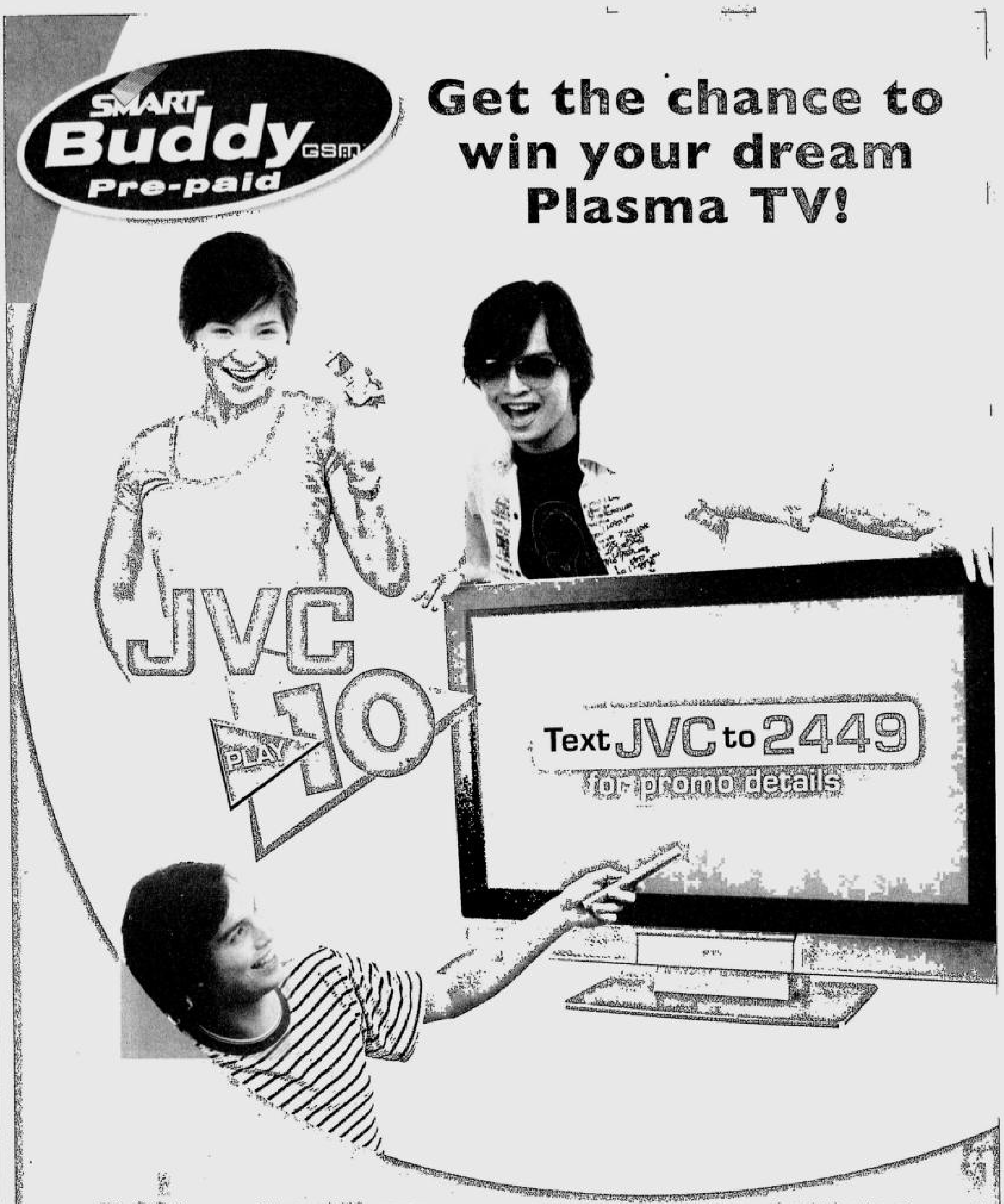
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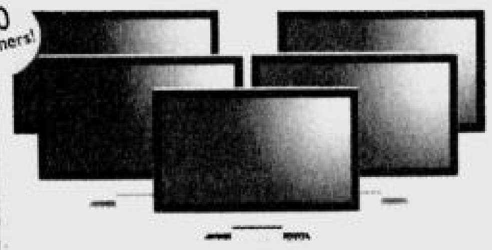
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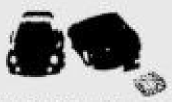
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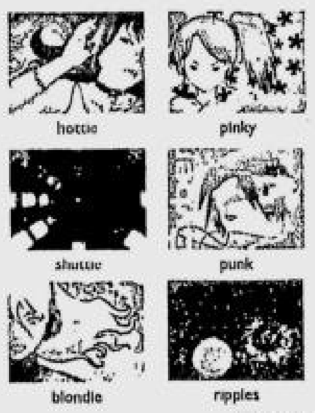
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BSP says peso to weather external shocks

BSP GOVERNOR Amando Tetangco tries out the ExpressNet ATM of BPI during interconnection launch between ExpressNet and BancNet. With him are BPI president Aurelio Montinola III (right) and Metrobank's Angelito Villanueva. RUDY ESPERAS

Regional currencies reeling due to US rate hike fears

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS YESTERday said that the country's sound economic fundamentals would support the peso against external shocks such as the escalating jitters caused by a looming interest rate increase in the United States.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. told reporters that the recent depreciation of the local currency, which had given up the gains made earlier this year, was a reflection of a regional and global selldown on emerging market assets.

"You've seen this volatility in the financial markets around the world, in equity markets, and currency markets, so it's not only the peso but other currencies are also affected by this," Tetangco said.

"But what I want to say is that the macroeconomic fundamentals of the Philippines remain sound," he said.

The BSP chief noted that the country was still enjoying resilient economic growth and the national government has seen an improvement in its fiscal position.

BSP/ B5

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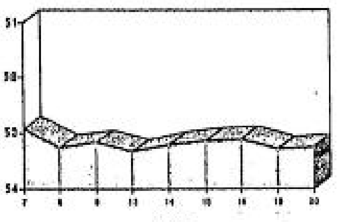

JUNE

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As of 5 p.m., June 20, 2006

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As of 5 p.m., June 20, 2006

GOLD: $570.80-571.30

per ounce Hong Kong, June 20, 2006

WHAT'S INSIDE

Lorenzos' next meal: Goldilocks /B3

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BIR reforms translate to P5.7B in additional taxes /B10

Banks complete link-up of all ATM networks

By Doris C. Dumlao

BANK DEPOSITORS CAN NOW ACCESS their accounts at any automated teller machine (ATM) across the country, regardless of whether their bank belongs to BancNet, ExpressNet or Megalink.

The last leg of the three-way interconnection went live yesterday as BancNet and ExpressNet ATM networks officially hooked up a year after the two networks announced an agreement to link their more than 6,000 ATMs.

Before this, the two networks were separately connected with the third ATM network, Megalink. The three-way linkage finally came 16 years after ATM banking was introduced in the country.

"The effort is consistent with BancNet's advocacy for a shared network infrastructure built around the principle of resource sharing and economies of scale," said BancNet chair and Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. director Angelito Villanueva during the launching of the BancNet-ExpressNet interconnection yesterday.

"This convergence upholds both networks' commitment to excellence and quality," added Aurelio Montinola III, president of Bank of the Philippine Islands and chair of ExpressNet.

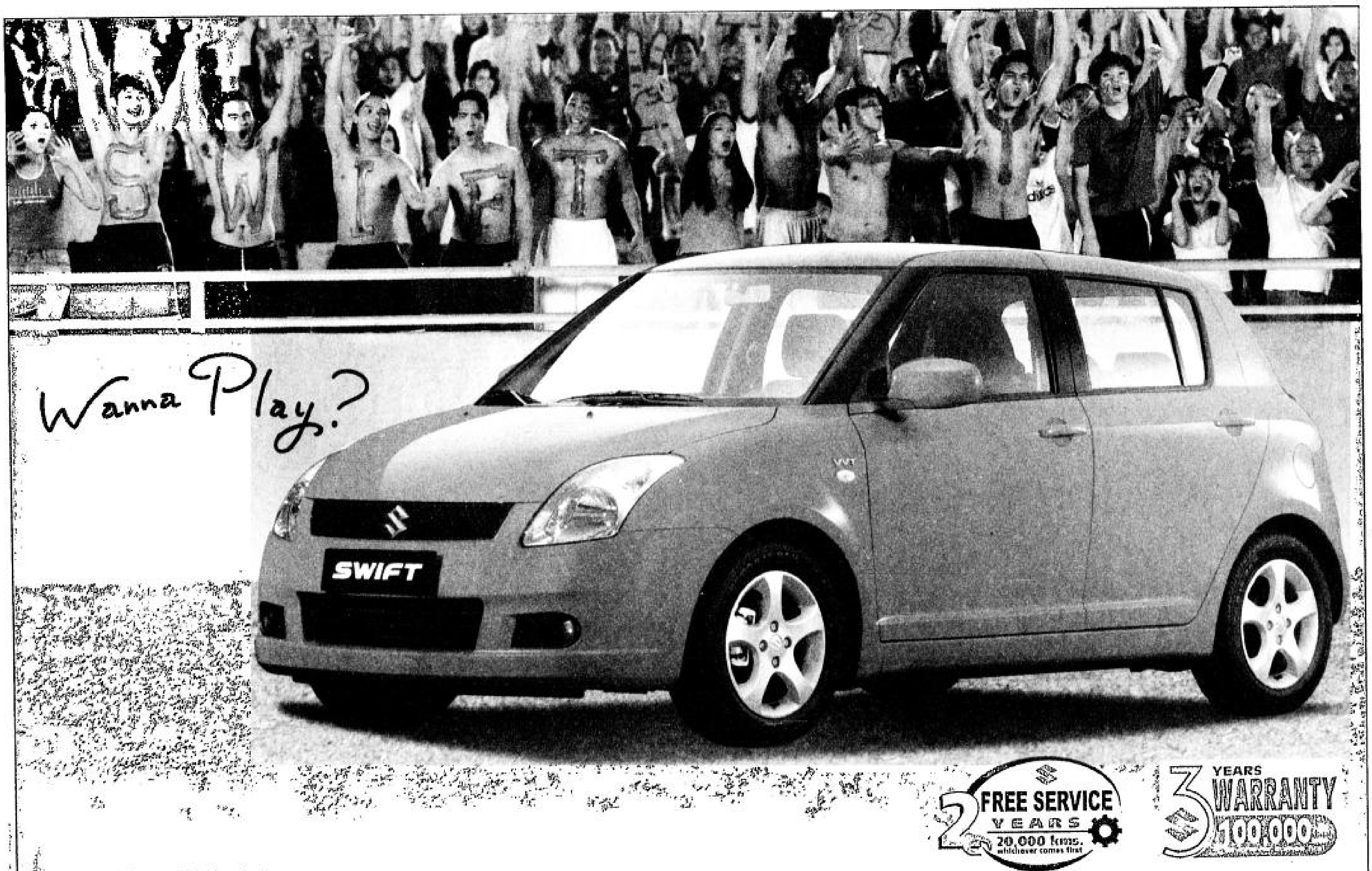
Montinola said the partnership would encourage the use of innovative banking channels and thus lead the country "toward more technology-savvy banking methods."

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr., who graced the launching of the BancNet-ExpressNet interconnection at the BSP, said this initiative would set a single electronic platform for a more convenient and cost-efficient delivery of financial services nationwide.

"This sharing of network infrastructure is a strategic move that is expected to reduce transaction costs which, in turn, would ultimately translate to lower service fees for all ATM-related transactions of the (country's) over 10 million ATM cardholders," Tetangco said.

It was the BSP which called for the three-way union among BancNet, ExpressNet and Megalink 15 months ago

BANKS/ B3



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5-year treasury bond rate increases to 10.63%

Rise acceptable because of the high volume of bids, says Cruz

By Michelle V. Remo

THE RATE FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S 5-year Treasury bonds jumped to 10.625 percent in yesterday's auction, following the uptrend in the interest rates in offshore markets.

The latest rate for the 5-year bonds was 212.5 basis points higher than the 8.5 percent recorded in the last auction on March 7.

"Rates are high all over. We cannot be exempted," National Treasurer Omar Cruz said in a press briefing after the auction. But the treasurer said the increase in the rates was acceptable given the high volume of bids submitted during the auction.

Cruz said the Bureau of the Treasury's auction committee was not inclined to control the movement of interest rates. He said the agency would allow the rise in the rates provided it was coupled with increased demand.

"We do not want to issue (securities) in a market that does not want to buy. But in this case, you can see that there are tenders," Cruz said.

Tenders for the 5-year bonds reached P14.186 billion, while the government's debt offering was only P3.5 billion.

The auction committee accepted P3.5 billion worth of bids.

Cruz noted that the 5-year bonds were trading at between 10.5 and 10.625 percent in the secondary market. This range was the auction committee's basis for accepting the latest 10.625-percent rate offered for the 5-year bonds.

The official said domestic bond investors might have already been pricing in the likely increase in the US interest rate in their bids for local government securities.

The US Federal Reserve is expected to implement another 25-basis-point rate hike in its meeting before the end of the month. This was fueled by the statement of Fed Chair Ben Bernanke that the monetary authority would exercise a tough stand against inflation.

The Fed has been increasing its policy rate since June 2004 to the the current level of 5 percent.

Analysts said the rising US interest rate had been affecting local capital markets, including that of the Philippines, because of narrowing interest rate differentials between US interest rates and those in emerging economies.

An increase in US interest rate makes bonds of emerging markets, like that of the Philippines, less attractive. As such, they incur higher credit risk premiums.

In the meantime, Cruz said the Bureau of the Treasury, tasked with managing the country's borrowings and liabilities, would announce possible changes in its third-quarter domestic borrowing program.

Revisions would take into consideration market appetite in terms of volume of government securities and tenors.

Originally, the BTr programmed P104.5 billion worth of domestic borrowings for this year. Of the amount, P46 billion were supposed to be raised through auction of treasury bills, while the remaining P58.5 billion would be generated through bond offerings.

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Napocor Q1 output up

By Abigail L. Ho

NATIONAL POWER CORP. PRODUCED 3.63 percent more power in the first quarter, with gross generation reaching 9,410.13 gigawatt-hours (GWh) from 9,080.68 GWh in the same period last year.

Napocor's sales and services group said in a report that power generated in the first three months was more than the 8,920.73 GWh projected for the period.

Luzon continued to account for bulk of the generated power, producing 63.87 percent of the total power produced from January to March, or 6,010.24 GWh. This represented a 7.55-percent increase from last year's output of 5,588.37 GWh.

The amount of power produced in Luzon also exceeded Napocor's original forecast of 5,590.40 GWh.

The Visayas grid contributed 18.02 percent, or 1,695.60 GWh, to gross generation, 4.96 percent lower than last year's 1,784.04 GWh.

Despite the year-on-year decline, the Visayas grid's production in the January-March period was still higher than the state firm's projected 1,631.58-GWh production for the period.

The amount of power produced in Mindanao declined slightly to 1,704.28 GWh in the first three months of the year from 1,708.26 GWh in the same period last year, but was still higher than the projected 1,698.75 GWh.

Mindanao accounted for 18.11 percent of Napocor's gross generation.

In terms of generation mix, geothermal plants remained the state firm's biggest producer, accounting for 30.62 percent of gross generation with its production of 2,881.19 GWh of power.

In the same period last year, geothermal plants produced 2,746.56 GWh of power, accounting for 30.25 percent of total production.

No to proposed zero tariff on corn imports, says DA chief

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE HAS rejected the proposed tariff-free importation of corn.

The proposal was made by local feed millers' who claimed to be needing to import corn to meet their requirements.

"We will not allow zero tariff on corn imports. They (the local feed millers sector) will have to make use of their MAV allocations," according to Agriculture Secretary Domingo F. Panganiban, adding that the national government needed the tariff revenues.

Traders and feed millers are planning to bring in additional corn imports to cover a yearly supply shortfall of 1.3 million metric tons.

"The industry has to cope with the growing demand both for food corn and corn for animal feeds," said Ricardo Pinca, vice president of the Philippine Association of Feed Millers Inc., in a separate interview.

Pinca said corn imports had breached the minimum access volume of 216,000 MT. The tariffs on corn imports in excess of the MAV range from 30 to 45 percent.

Of the 279,642 MT expected corn imports for the year, 102,792 MT have already been delivered, industry data showed. The feed millers are seeking that the rest of the required import volume be slapped 0 tariff.

Pinca said that if the feed milling industry would not be able to get the supply at zero tariff, the prices of poultry products and hogs would continue to rise.

Corn is a key ingredient in feeds manufacturing.

The P103.25-billion feed milling industry last year produced 8.6 million MT of feeds, or about 172 million bags of 50 kilograms each.

Corn accounts for half of the total feed milling industry's production and the other half consists of corn-substitutes such as feed wheat and soybean meal.

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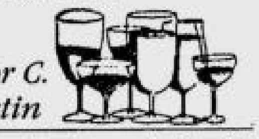

Lorenzos' next meal: Goldilocks

THE CASH-FLUSH LORENZOS are close to having Goldilocks for their next meal.

Pancake House CEO Martin Lorenzo was flustered yesterday when the well-connected ATR Kim Eng Securities sent out an advisory to its stock brokerage clients that the Lorenzos have made a formal offer to buy the bakehouse chain for P2 billion.

Apparently, Lorenzo has not yet obtained the approval of the minority shareholders, although the controlling Go family has reportedly agreed to the 100 percent cash sellout.

What is complicating the deal is that apparently a different branch of the Go family, through GBSI Management Corp., controls the US and Canadian operations of the bakeshop chain.

In addition to the 192 stores in the Philippines, Goldilocks has 16 outlets in the United States and a lone branch in Vancouver, Canada.

According to ATR Kim Eng, the Lorenzos, flush with P4.7 billion in cash from having spun off their Del Monte business, have given the Go family 90 days to get the clan's consent.

Eventually, the Lorenzos will fold the Goldilocks acquisition into their listed Pancake House, ATR Kim Eng added.

Rumor of the possible acquisition had already caused a 14.63 percent price spike in the hardly traded Pancake House stock in the last two days.

(Disclosure: Cocktales owns a small number of Pancake House shares.)

Money-go-round

- BATANGAS Gov. Armand Sanchez has imported a level-5 bullet/bomb-proof Chevrolet Suburban, outfitted by Exo Armorers, to replace the blown-up Hummer that he had been using.

- THE Astoria hotel in Ortigas wants to clarify that it is in no way related to the Astor hotel in Makati that is having problems with City Hall.

The Ortigas hotel is managed by the group of former Manila Hotel GM Miguel Cerqueda, while the Makati Avenue hotel, controlled by former censors board chief Manuel Morato, is managed by Best Western, the US chain.

- THE Wrigley's chewing gum factory in Antipolo City sits on a piece of land whose ownership rests on disputed tax declaration, not on clean land title.

The factory site used to be planted to palay until the local franchisee transferred the gum factory to the upland site about a decade ago.

Heard through the grapevine

TAIPAN son Henry Sy Jr. has reorganized the real estate group of SM Investments Corp. to restart, among other things, the arrested development of the 500-hectare Susana Heights subdivision off the South Luzon Expressway.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

Online trading firm plans IPO

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

ONLINE TRADING portal BayanTrade is considering a possible initial public offering early next year to raise as much as $5 million for its planned expansion into the US market, BayanTrade president Dante Briones said.

Briones said BayanTrade was studying a number of options to expand in the United States to offer technology solutions, including the possibility of acquiring a US company or setting up a sales office.

He said the company's major shareholders were willing to sell up to 30 percent of their combined stake in the online trading portal as part of the proposed IPO.

BayanTrade was formed in 2001 by a consortium of six major Philippine companies that included Philippine Long Distance & Telephone Co., Ayala Corp, Aboitiz & Co., Benpres Holdings Corp., JG Summit Holdings Inc. and United Laboratories Inc.

"We are profitable in 2005 and there is no reason why we can't be profitable in 2006. We expect gross revenues to grow by 50 to 60 percent and profitability to grow by 200 to 300 percent this year," Briones said.

Briones added that he was in talks with prospective strategic partners in the United States to expand the firm's market, but declined to give more details.

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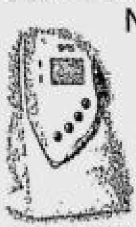

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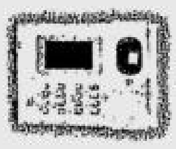

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GE launches banking presence in RP

By Doris C. Dumlao

AMERICAN CONGLOMERATE General Electric is bullish on banking opportunities in the Philippines, the first Asian country where it acquired a banking institution that it launched yesterday as GE Money Bank.

GE Consumer Finance bought out the 30-branch Keppel Monte Bank from Singapore's Keppel group for about P1.45 billion in December last year and rebranded the lender as GE Money Bank.

"The Philippines is a big bang waiting to happen," said GE Money Philippines president and CEO Ben Kua, noting that the local market was poised for greater growth.

Kua said GE could leverage on its global expertise to reach out to the country's "underserved" market segment--particularly the small and medium enterprises and the consumer market--while remaining as a thrift bank. He projected that domestic profits and business volume would likely grow by more than 10 percent a year.

"The country has a very young population and their demand for innovative financial products and services is substantial. We are aggressively spending for growth to respond to this need," he said.

GE is spending $1 million this year to boost the thrift bank's infrastructure and technology platform. Its lending portfolio is currently focused on SMEs, mortgage and auto finance, but it plans to make inroads into other consumer businesses such as personal loans and credit cards.

"We believe in the Philippines. We believe this will grow much bigger than where it is now," said Mark Toohey, chief finance officer for GE Money Asia, who noted that the bank was also open to further acquisition opportunities.

"With operations in 47 countries and a solid footprint in Asia, the Philippines will serve as a strategic cornerstone of GE Money's Southeast Asian strategy," Toohey said.

Kua noted that GE's rosy outlook on the country was due to improved economic fundamentals, as indicated by a recent upgrade by global credit rating agency Standard & Poor's on its outlook on sovereign credit rating from negative to stable.

"Overseas remittances are coming in, driving consumption, and economic reforms help sustain long-term economic growth," Kua said.

He added that the business sector had also grown indifferent to political hiccups.

GE Money Bank, which employs 350 people in the Philippines, plans to grow in this market by investing in technology to drive transactional and online banking, offering "best-in-market" services in the area of fast turnaround time and customer service and investing in operating platforms to bring speed and convenience.

Banks complete link-up of all ATM networks

From page B1

under the term of Tetangco's predecessor Rafael Buenaventura.

BancNet pioneered the first ATM consortium in 1990. In 1995, BancNet linked up with Megalink while Megalink and ExpressNet subsequently interconnected two or three years later.

"But while we would want you to seize the opportunities, we also want industry participants to be mindful of the inherent risks," Tetangco said.

"Accordingly, we shall be crafting relevant regulations that would ensure that risks inherent in electronic banking are adequately managed and depositors protected at all time," Tetangco said.

Tetangco said the establishment of appropriate safeguards and mechanisms for managing and controlling risks could not be overemphasized with the growing sophistication of the conduct of banking operations with the use of new technologies.

"Just recently, we issued a memo advising banks to exercise vigilance in their operations and to educate the public against fraudulent practices involving ATM transactions. Information is vital if we are to protect the interests of the banking public and maintain their trust," the BSP chief said.

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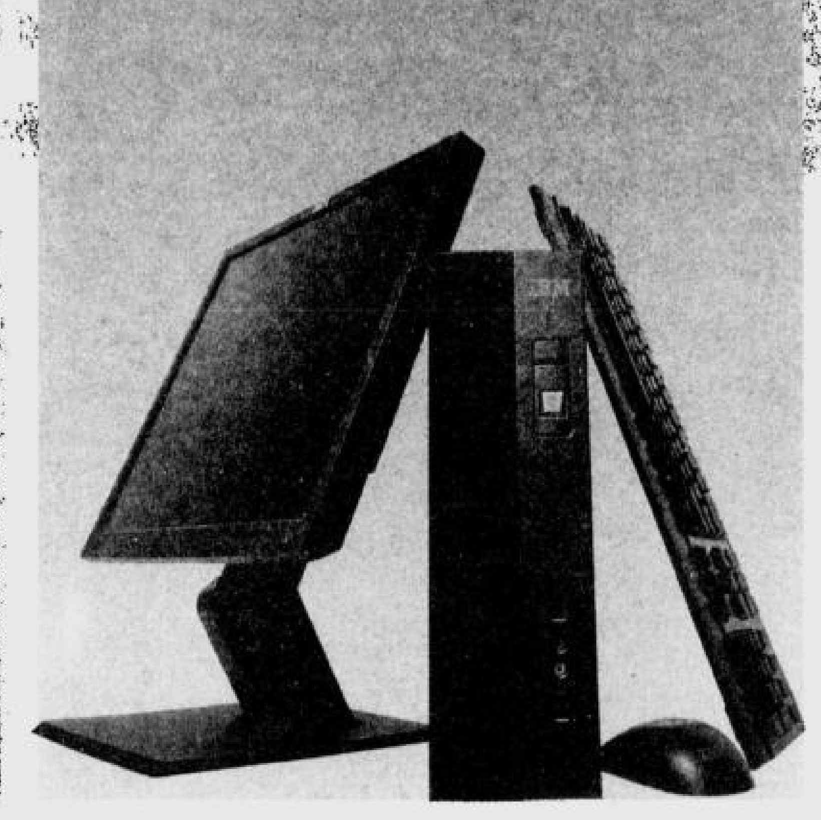

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AAA rating to boost Globe finances

Seal of good housekeeping seen to benefit consumers

By Daxim L. Lucas

GLOBE TELECOM INC. EXPECTS TO improve its already finely tuned financial efficiency levels after an international debt watcher gave the Ayala-controlled firm its highest rating for peso-denominated issues.

In an interview, Globe Telecom president and CEO Gerardo C. Ablaza Jr. said the rating also means lower cost of capital for the company, which is the second-largest telecommunications firm in the country.

"Higher credit ratings indicate better credit quality and potentially lower borrowing costs," Ablaza said.

The effects of the company's "AAA" rating will also trickle down to its subscribers either in the form of more affordable or more efficient services, he said.

"It is important in today's market environment that we are able to manage our costs well—operating, marketing and financial costs," Ablaza added.

In a statement, credit ratings agency Fitch Ratings assigned a long term rating of "AAA" for Globe Telecom, and an outlook of "stable" due to the company's "improving position in the fixed-line voice and internet services markets, and its very sound level of financial flexibility."

At present, Globe holds an equivalent of P46 billion worth of debt from foreign and local creditors.

Approximately 63 percent of this amount is denominated in US dollars, while the balance comes in the form of peso-denominated borrowings—the primary beneficiary of the company's "AAA" rating.

Last month, Ablaza announced that the company plans to borrow as much as $130 million from creditors in the near term to finance its foray into third-generation (3G) network services.

He said the amount may be drawn in US dollars or in its peso equivalent, depending on which currency would be more advantageous for the firm.

Fitch's award of a seal of good housekeeping for the company may give it more incentive to borrow in pesos, especially since interest rates on dollar-denominated debt are already on the rise, while local policymakers have so far resisted the global trend toward higher interest rates.

In its statement, Fitch said "the neutral regulatory environment and lack of comparably well-financed competitors effectively support Globe's efforts to sustain its position as the primary challenger to the incumbent."

Fitch pointed out, however, that Globe remains "highly dependent on its cellular operations for cash flow growth, and that the industry faces challenging times ahead in light of the slowdown in subscriber growth, the intensely competitive nature of the cellular segment, and the recent launch of 3G services."

"Globe reported only modest improvement in its financial profile in 2005 (a consequence of the acute competition and share buyback in the first half of 2005), but the company is expected to consolidate its market position over the course of 2006, leading to further strengthening of key credit protection measures," Fitch said.

Competition and Globe's decision to purge many inactive customers contributed to the modest revenue growth in 2005 compared to prior years.

Combined with rapid network expansion, Globe also experienced margin pressure, Fitch explained.

"However, the launch of innovative loyalty plans in late 2005 has had positive effects in terms of average revenue per subscriber and subscriber growth," it said.

Transco concessionaire must secure congressional franchise, says PSALM

By Abigail L. Ho

THE POWER SECTOR ASSETS AND Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) will require the winning bidder for the 25-year National Transmission Corp. (Transco) concession to secure a congressional franchise before it can operate.

According to PSALM president Nieves Osorio, Transco is a public utility. And before the contract award may be awarded, the future concessionaire will definitely have to secure a congressional franchise.

Under the concession agreement, Transco will retain the legal titles to all transmission assets and may continue to sell sub-transmission assets to distribution utilities and electric cooperatives. Transco may also take over the business if the winning concessionaire defaults.

When the concessionaire finally obtains a congressional franchise, it will become responsible for operating, repairing and maintaining the transmission assets. It will likewise be the one to secure the necessary financing for the construction of new assets.

Osorio said bidding for the Transco concession would revolve around only one financial parameter: The concession fee, which represented "the enterprise value of the business, or the net present value of all future cash flows under the concession agreement with the concessionaire."

"This structure mirrors an asset sale, thereby maximizing upfront proceeds from the privatization," she said in a statement yesterday.

Osorio added that the concession fee would be predetermined "to ensure an objective bid process, based on a single financial parameter."

Interested parties have until July 18 to submit their expressions of interest to join the bidding. Deadline for the submission of prequalification proposals has been set for July 26.

A pre-bid conference has been scheduled for Sept. 6, with the deadline for submission of bids set for Sept. 27.

Interested investors may conduct due diligence from June 5 to Sept. 26.

To pre-qualify, a potential bidder should have a member or affiliate with a net asset value or market capitalization of at least $500 million.

They also have to have an affiliate "with sufficient experience in operating and maintaining electricity transmission systems comparable to that of the Philippines, with at least 6,000 circuit kilometers and a minimum 5,000 megawatts peak demand and a voltage level of 115 kilovolts (kV) to 230 kV."

The bidders also have to post a $30-million bid bond to ensure that they will not renege on any of their commitments.

Pagcor stands pat on casino closure

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE PHILIPPINE Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) has stood pat on its decision to close Legenda Casino at the Subic Freeport Zone, citing the company's failure since 2001 to pay the government over P365 million in gaming fees, Pagcor spokesperson Edward King said.

"We gave them ample time from 2001 until now," King said. "It is their duty to settle with us."

The failure of hotel group Legend International Resorts Ltd., the owner of the casino, to pay the government its equivalent share of the casino's net income—as prescribed in Legenda's license to operate—led to the closure of the Subic recreation facility on May 10, according to Pagcor.

King stressed that Pagcor only closed the casino, and not the resort-hotel.

Legend Resorts is claiming that it has been losing money since 1999 because of the Asian financial crisis.

Legend Resorts also claimed that on Jan. 31, 1999, it had remitted P34.8 million to Pagcor.

In a statement, Pagcor also alleged that in 1999, Legenda "was padding its expenses," making it appear that it was losing money.

Pagcor said that a special audit team discovered that Legenda was charging expenses of its non-casino units (hotel expenses) to the casino operations, resulting in net losses.

Legend Resorts denied the padding charge and said that it had not committed any fraud in its financial records.

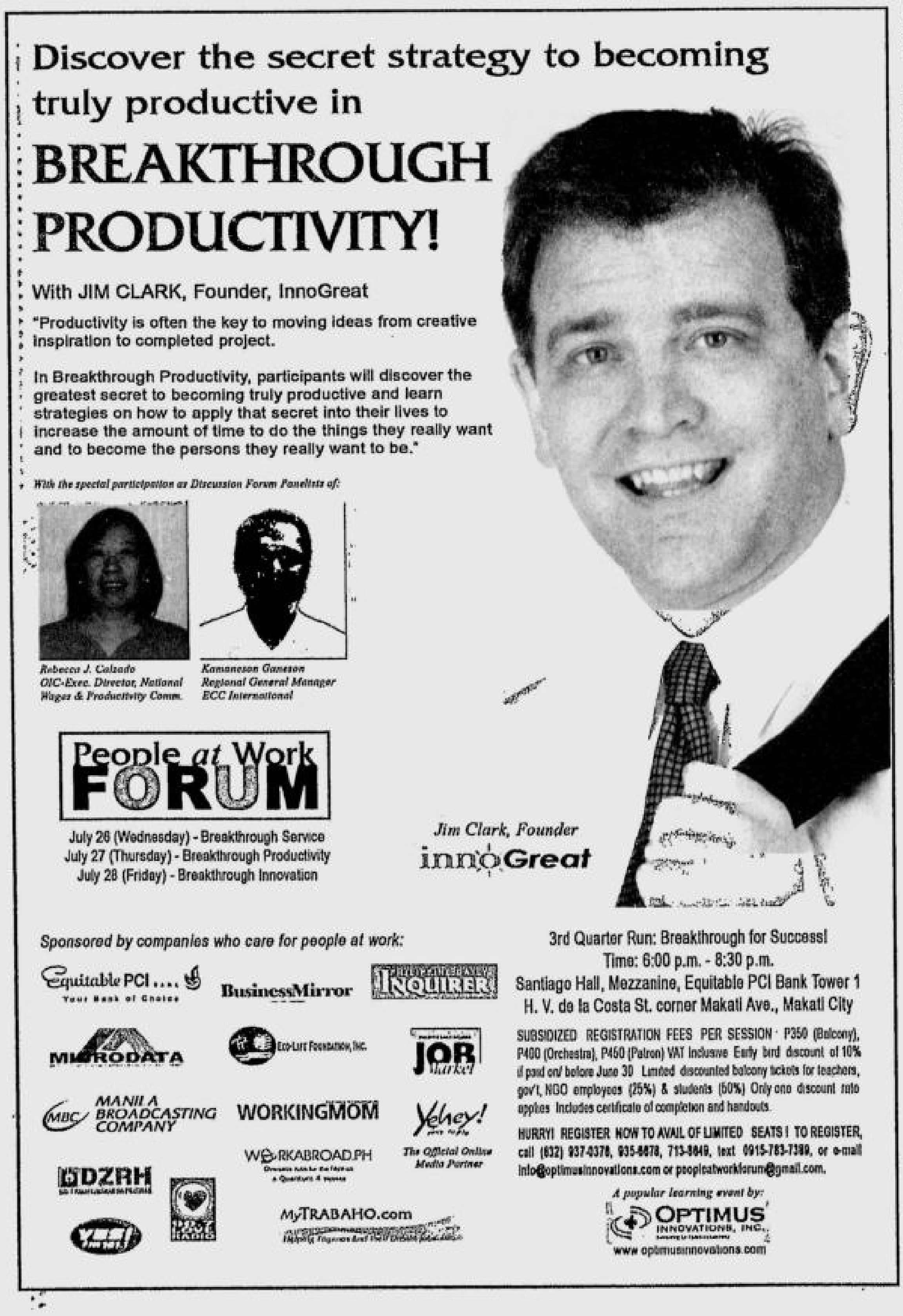
Pagcor officials said that they changed their decision to cancel Legenda's gaming license only after the casino operator proposed a repayment scheme.

Under the scheme, Pagcor and the Subic Bay Management Authority would each receive their respective gaming shares of P5 million a month (or P60 million a year) from Legend Resorts.

The payments were in lieu of the previous gaming share of 15 percent of the casino's net income that had to be remitted to government.

Pagcor also denied reports that over 1,500 workers were on the verge of losing their jobs due to the closure of Legenda casino.

"The actual number of affected employees is significantly lower than what was reported," Pagcor said. "There are only about 200 casino personnel; the rest are hotel staff. The Legenda hotel remains up and running and ... there is no reason why hotel personnel should also be affected."



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(As of June 20, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	50,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	32	32	31	31.5	409,800
Bank of the Phil. Islands	46.5	46.5	44.5	44.5	3,199,000
Citystate Savings Bank	20.5	20.5	20.5	20.5	400
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.38	970,000
Equitable Pci Bank Inc.	73	73	72	72	87,500
International Exch. Bank	41	41	41	41	6,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	31.5	32	31.5	32	688,900
Philippine National Bank	32.5	32.5	32.5	32.5	32,500
Phil. Savings Bank	39	39.5	39	39	8,300
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	17	17	17	17	5,000
Security Bank Corp.	44	44	41.5	42	557,800
Union Bank of the Phil.	42	42	42	42	26,700
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	90,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	31	31.5	31	31.5	2,800
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2000	2030	2000	2030	2,090
Ivantage Corp.	1.18	1.18	1.16	1.16	2,095,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	41.5	42	41	42	164,100
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	43	43	42.5	42.5	190,700
Manila Electric Co. A	13.75	13.75	13.75	13.75	2,000
Manila Electric Co. B	20.75	20.75	20.75	20.75	14,500
Manila Water Co. Inc.	7	7	7	7	3,552,000
Petron Corp.	3.55	3.55	3.5	3.55	1,324,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	480,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.1	3.1	3.05	3.05	176,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23	23	23	23	27,700
Jollibee Foods Corp.	31.5	32	30.5	31	535,800
Pancake House Inc.	4.75	4.75	4.7	4.7	111,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	1,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63.5	64.5	63.5	64.5	120,700
San Miguel Corp. B	69	70	68.5	70	246,800
Universal Robina Corp	19	19	18.75	19	229,700
Vitarich Corp.	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	200,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	250,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	4,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	107,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.4	4.4	4.35	4.4	1,151,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.22	1.22	1.2	1.22	129,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	200,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	6,000,000
Ayala Corp.	347.5	347.5	337.5	337.5	304,090
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.49	0.56	0.49	0.53	3,030,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.2	410,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	2,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.92	1.92	1.86	1.88	1,814,000
APC Group Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	1,060,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	53,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.94	0.94	0.9	0.9	400,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.36	1.36	22,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.99	0.99	0.98	0.99	3,660,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.6	3.65	3.5	3.5	7,340,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	2.75	2.85	2.75	2.85	326,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	5.9	5.9	5.5	5.5	1,174,000
Pacifica	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	3,000,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.52	1.54	1.52	1.54	87,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	400,000
SM Investments Corp.	210	210	205	206	56,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.68	0.68	170,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	10,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	1,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	11.5	11.5	11	11.25	6,765,200
Belle Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.02	1.02	283,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.88	1.88	1.86	1.86	300,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	1,000,000
Elb Realty Developers Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	160,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.57	1,050,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.28	1.28	1.26	1.26	2,595,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	370,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	180,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.38	1.38	39,524,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	5,180,000
Primex Corp.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	70,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	10	10	10	10	2,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	100,000
SM Development Corp.	1.58	1.62	1.58	1.62	40,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc	7.3	7.4	7.2	7.3	9,148,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	14.25	14.25	14	14	29,100
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.14	1.16	1.14	1.16	800,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	915	915	905	905	55,920
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	688,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1790	1790	1760	1770	80,230
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.17	0.175	0.17	0.175	130,000
Ionics Inc.	2.44	2.44	2.22	2.3	786,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.047	0.049	0.046	0.049	400,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.14	1.18	1.14	1.18	75,000
Philweb Corp.	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.029	81,700,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	2.55	2.55	2.5	2.5	120,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	13.25	13.25	13	13	37,600
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	802,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.59	0.59	0.57	0.57	3,300,000
EDUCATION					
IPeople Inc.	3.05	3.05	3	3	285,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.02	2.02	1.98	1.98	240,000
Paxys Inc	9.7	9.7	9.7	9.7	172,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	5,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6.2	6.2	5.9	6	863,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	3,310,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. B	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	140,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.021	0.021	0.02	0.02	59,300,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.022	0.022	0.021	0.021	126,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	148,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	3.35	3.35	3.25	3.3	13,817,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	3.3	3.35	3.25	3.35	10,084,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	27	27	27	27	44,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.29	750,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.24	0.25	0.23	0.24	670,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.009	0.009	0.0085	0.0085	92,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	5,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.14	1.14	1.06	1.06	155,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.06	1.06	1.04	1.04	200,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	16.5	16.5	16	16	457,200
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series K	10	10	10	10	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Q	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	500
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,300
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	177,000

DISCLOSURES

SUSAN Rajanayagam and Ari-Ben Sebastian have tendered their resignations as directors of **IPVG Corp.** effective April 22 and June 16, respectively. Elected in their place were Roger Stone and Eduardo Martin T. Lichauco. Meanwhile, lawyer Sheila Quien-Feliciano has likewise resigned as Corporate Secretary, Compliance Officer and Alternate Corporate Information Officer effective June 19. Lawyer Raquel C. Malillin-Gagalang has been appointed as her replacement.

***

ERNESTO O. Ang, Eduardo O. Ang, Emilio O. Ang, Edgard O. Ang, lawyer Ericson O. Ang and Jossie O. Chan have been reelected as directors of **Primex Corp.** on June 16. Ruben N. Gan was likewise elected as independent director.

***

RENE J. Buenaventura has been elected as director of **Philex Mining Corp.**, replacing Antonio L. Go, who resigned last April 2006. ***Compiled by Kate Pedroso, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

June 20, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.794597	1.000000	53.3000
Japan	Yen	0.006885	0.008665	0.4618
United Kingdom	Pound	1.463091	1.841300	98.1413
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.102316	0.128765	6.8632
Switzerland	Franc	0.640959	0.806647	42.9943
Canada	Dollar	0.710095	0.893655	47.6318
Singapore	Dollar	0.497525	0.626135	33.3730
Australia	Dollar	0.585770	0.737191	39.2923
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.108803	2.653928	141.4544
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.211870	0.266638	14.2118
Brunei	Dollar	0.495972	0.624181	33.2688
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000107	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.020645	0.025982	1.3848
UAE	Dirham	0.216358	0.272287	14.5129
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.258500	67.0781
Argentina	Peso	0.258212	0.324960	17.3204
Brazil	Real	0.356226	0.448310	23.8949
Denmark	Kroner	0.134168	0.168850	8.9997
India	Rupee	0.017364	0.021853	1.1648
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.216807	0.272851	14.5430
Mexico	New Peso	0.069216	0.087108	4.6429
New Zealand	Dollar	0.490038	0.616713	32.8708
Norway	Kroner	0.127263	0.160161	8.5366
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013186	0.016595	0.8845
South Africa	Rand	0.114166	0.143678	7.6580
Korea	Won	0.000826	0.001040	0.0554
Sweden	Kroner	0.107785	0.135648	7.2300
Syria	Pound	0.015307	0.019264	1.0268
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024420	0.030732	1.6380
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000370	0.000466	0.0248

UBS confident RP will meet fiscal targets in '06

Gov't in good position to keep budget gap at P125 billion

FARM SECTOR POSTING GROWTH
String beans produced in Parioc, Candon Cityin Ilocos Sur are being sold for P20- P30 per bundle. The country's farm output is expected to grow by 4.5 to 5 percent in the first semester on the back of a 7.5-percent growth in crop production.
LEONCIO BALBIN JR./PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

By Michelle V. Remo

INVESTMENT BANK UBS HAS MAINTAINED its view that the Philippines would meet, if not surpass, its fiscal target for the year given the disciplined spending showed by the government in previous months that helped compensate for its shortfall in tax collection.

"UBS' view remains unchanged that this is still very much a fiscal stabilization year and our core expectation is that the government will manage to achieve a stable to declining debt/GDP ratio, meeting the 2.1 percent target," the bank said in its analysis on the Philippines.

The government aims at reducing its budget deficit to only P125 billion this year, or 2.1 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), from last year's P146.8 billion. The goal is supported by several revenue-raising measures including the increase in value-added tax rate.

UBS noted that expenditures in the January-to-May period rose only 10 percent year-on-year, although spending should have grown by 16.1 percent if the fiscal program were complied with. This resulted in a five-month budget deficit of only P44.2 billion, which was 35 percent lower than the P67.8-billion budget gap recorded in the same period last year.

"The performance to date puts the government in a relatively good position to meet its full year budget gap target of P125 billion," UBS said.

The government seemed to be having difficulty in meeting its tax collection target, as the BIR registered a shortfall in revenue in the first five months of the year.

The BIR was tasked with collecting P272.2 billion, but it turned in only P268 billion. In May alone, the BIR was supposed to generate P62.23 billion in taxes, but it was able to collect only P61.7 billion.

UBS, however, shrugged off the BIR's shortfall vis-a-vis the target, as it noted that the revenue-agency's tax take still recorded a year-on-year growth.

The BIR's January-to-May collection was still 20.7-percent higher than that of the previous year's, while its May collection reflected a 25 percent year-on-year rise.

UBS' projections were consistent with the pronouncements of the Department of Finance that the government would stick to its targets and that it was confident it would meet the P125-billion deficit target for the year.

The DOF, head agency of the BIR, said several administrative measures would be implemented by the BIR to meet its P675.4 billion target for the full year despite setbacks in the first five months. The measures include tighter tax audit and updating of the BIR's taxpayers' database.

On another macroeconomic indicator, UBS said consumer inflation in the Philippines was seen to slow down to a yearly rate of only 5 percent by the end of the year barring another sharp rise in oil prices in the world market.

The country imports more than 90 percent of its oil requirements, and the government does not provide oil subsidy to consumers.

Consumer price index rose 6.9 percent year-on-year in May, decelerating from the 7.1 percent recorded in April and the 7.6 percent in February and March. The slowdown, which happened despite higher taxes, was attributed to the strengthening of the peso and easing of growth in oil prices.

Court issues injunction vs BCDA on Poro

THE BASES CONVERSION DEVELOPMENT Authority (BCDA) suffered another major legal setback in its reported bid to take over the Poro Point seaport after the Regional Trial Court Branch 29 of San Fernando City, La Union issued on June 16, 2006 a writ of preliminary injunction against the agency.

The San Fernando court earlier slapped BCDA and its subsidiary, Poro Point Management Corp., with a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO), stopping them from taking over the Poro Point seaport from its private operator.

When the TRO lapsed, the court issued the preliminary injunction. The order, penned by Executive Judge Victor Viloria, was issued based on the complaint filed by Bulk Handlers Inc. (BHI), which operates the seaport under a contact signed with the BCDA in 1999.

The seaport operator questioned a resolution passed by BCDA and PPMC declaring the contract null and void.

The injunction prevents BCDA and PPMC from implementing its takeover resolution and orders the agencies to observe the terms and conditions of the earlier agreements signed by BHI and the BCDA.

Named in the BHI complaint were BCDA and PPMC chair Filadelfo Singson-Rojas Jr., former AFP Chief of Staff and currently BCDA president Narciso Abaya, PPMC president Felix Singson-Racadio and PPMC directors Emma Lim, Carmencita Itchon, Amparo Aspiras, Yves Nisce and Anthony Manguiat, son-in-law of La Union Congressman Manuel Ortega.

BHI is the private sector component of the Poro Point Industrial Corp. (PPIC), which has a 70- percent stake in the company. BCDA owns the 30 percent balance in the entity.

Customs cool to BIR chief's target reallocation proposal

THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS IS COOL TO the proposal of making it shoulder part of the Bureau of Internal Revenue's target, saying its hand are full with its P200-billion revenue-collection target for the year.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales said he could not commit his agency to absorbing additional revenue-collection task. He stressed, however, that the agency would be able to meet its current target.

The BOC was tasked to collect P197 billion for 2006, but the Department of Finance, its head agency, had asked it to adopt an internal target of P200 billion.

Morales said its P200-billion target was already 39 percent higher than its actual collection last year of P146 billion.

"When the P200-billion target was given to us, we did not complain. When a target is given, I know we should just work on achieving it. But will they not be content with a 39-percent increase?" asked Morales.

The BIR earlier suggested the transfer of part of its tax collection target for this year to the BOC.

Revenue Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag earlier said that P27 billion of the BIR's target should be reallocated to the BOC, which has the capability to collect more value-added tax on oil products.

While the BIR collects taxes on locally manufactured goods and services, the BOC collects duties and value-added tax on imports.

Under its fiscal program for this year, the national government is supposed to raise P975.4 billion in revenue. Of the amount, P675.4 billion should come from the BIR while P197 billion from the BOC. The rest should come from other revenue-generating agencies.

Buñag said the BIR agreed with the DOF's position of keeping the P975.4-billion target, but was hoping there could be reallocation of the target.

The BIR's call came amid the difficulties it was facing in meeting its monthly targets, saying this had partly to do with factors that were out of the revenue agency's control. Buñag cited the cancellation of previous schedules of auctions for Treasury bills and bonds, which prevented the BIR from collecting supposed documentary stamp tax on government securities.

Morales said the BOC was confident of meeting its full-year target, noting that the agency was likely to post another good performance in June. But Morales is not inclined to agree to further raising the collection target.

The DOF said it would study the proposal of the BIR and that it would likely have a decision before the end of the month.

But Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran said that as of now, the DOF has not yet found sufficient reason to make a reallocation of the revenue targets.

Michelle V. Remo

SMIC creates property division

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SM INVESTMENTS Corp. OF MALL tycoon Henry Sy is poised to take advantage of the expected upswing in the property sector through the creation of a new division focused on this trend.

In a disclosure, SMIC said it has organized the SM Investments Property Group to map out the direction and implement the conglomerate's plan to seize leadership across three business fronts: residential and condominium development, commercial development, and leisure and tourism.

SM Investments is one of the Philippines' largest conglomerates operating in retail merchandising, shopping and entertainment malls, financial services, and real estate and tourism.

The property group is headed by SM Investments vice chair Henry T. Sy, Jr., who will serve as its managing director.

"The organization of the Property Group is part of the company's strategy to diversify its businesses and to capitalize on its strength in the mall and retail businesses." said Sy.

"While remaining anchored in the retail and shopping mall businesses, we see a lot of growth potential in the property sector, which is recovering from the 1997 Asian crisis," he added.

SM Investments is using its landbank to lay the groundwork for various real estate projects. The conglomerate is targeting key market segments, including the overseas Filipino workers, the booming business process outsourcing sector, and the rising number of tourists, both domestic and foreign.

BSP says peso to weather . . .

From page B1

"You see a continuation of the BOP (balance-of-payments) surplus so the external liquidity continues to be very positive. That has allowed us to build up the reserves also, Tetangco said.

The BSP chief added that reforms to further stabilize the banking system were also being sustained following the shift to International Accounting Standards as well as the adoption of the standardized capital adequacy approach under Basle 2 at the beginning of 2007.

"All of this shows that the fundamentals are good. It should support the peso," Tetangco said.

This developed as bearish stock markets and expectations of further increases in the US Federal Reserve's interest rate continued to pummel Asian currencies.

Speculation that the US Fed would raise its interest rate for the 17th time next week and also in August has boosted the dollar in recent days.

The peso opened weak at 53.28 and hit an intra-day low of 53.38 before closing firmer at 53.25 against the greenback. The local currency thus gained 4 centavos from Monday's finish of 52.29 against the greenback.

But stocks took another beating yesterday, closing 2.44 percent lower as investors either stayed on the sidelines following the latest downturn on Wall Street or unloaded stocks in anticipation of another US interest rate increase, dealers said.

They said the culprit for another region-wide sell-off was a familiar warning from US central bank officials of the dangers of rising inflation, pointing to the need for higher interest rates as a result.

The composite index fell 51.70 points to 2,068.09 after trading between 2,063.35 and 2,119.79. Volume was 715.19 million shares worth P994.77 million.

Losers led gainers 75 to eight, with 37 stocks unchanged.

"The Philippine market is simply taking its cue from how Wall Street and the regional markets are performing," said Oliver Plana of Asiasec Equities.

Investors remained preoccupied with concern on interest rates, said Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities, suggesting the BSP could eventually follow the US Federal Reserve's tightening cycle.

The US central bank meets June 28-29 when it is widely expected to raise rates by a quarter of a point for a 17th consecutive time to 5.25 percent. The BSP meets on June 29. *With a report from AFP*

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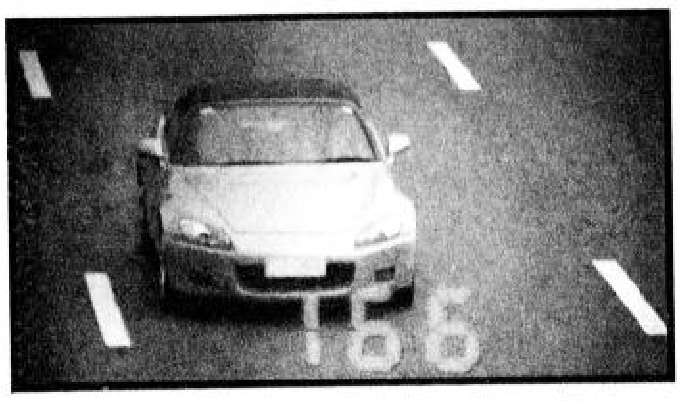

TMC'S laser gun captures a zippy Honda S2000

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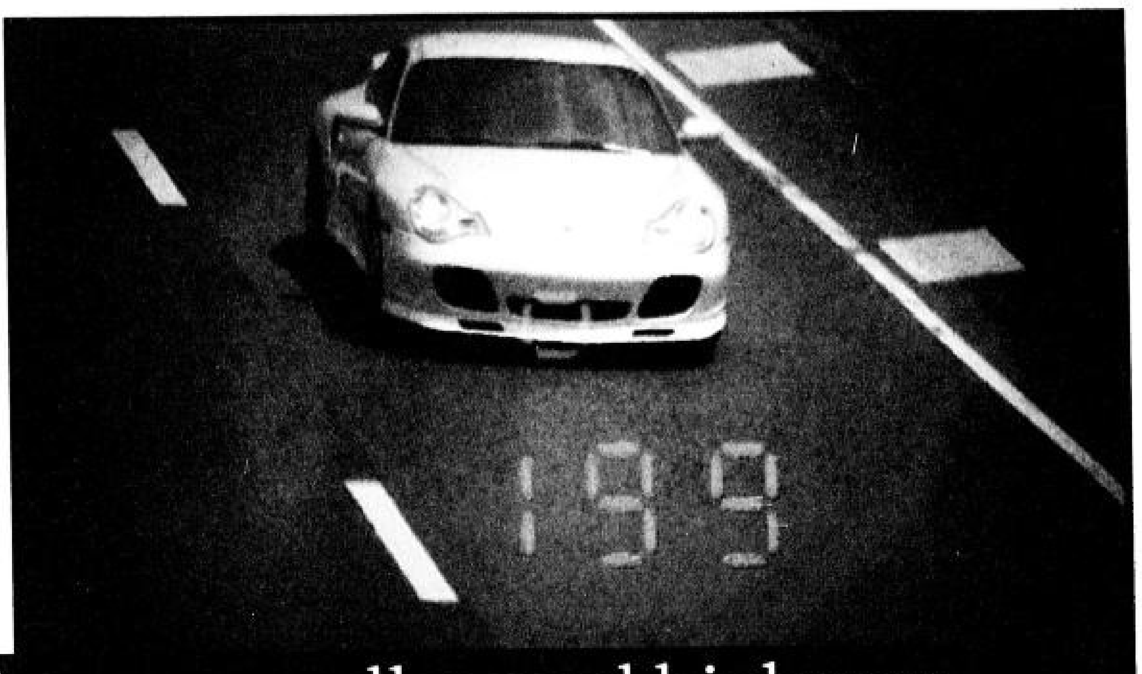

SPEED bliss for the Porsche 911

Gotcha!

Dousing speeding temptation on a well-paved highway

By Tessa R. Salazar

(First of three parts)

WE'LL LET YOU IN ON one secret the North Luzon Expressway traffic officers keep. They use their speed guns from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. only. Why only that time? Well, outside of that time frame, it's simply too dark for their Olympus C770 cameras attached to the Pro Laser 3 custom speed guns to take any clear shot of speed freaks out there.

So, will you let all hell break loose on a Sunday dawn and make the NLEX your own personal racetrack?

Before stepping on the gas pedal of your 490-horsepower F430 or your 507-hp BMW M5, let your imagination take off first and bring you fast forward to the point when you have to literally "stop on a dime." Well, can you?

Speed 'perps'

The INQUIRER bets its whole profit share you can't. This writer recently got hold of NLEX file photos of speeding "perps" taken at the Burol Interchange, and after securing permission from the MNTC management, we are now publishing these photos. These crystal-clear images are what actually come out of these high-tech Olympus cameras fitted to the laser speed guns. The plate numbers have been intentionally blurred to protect the owners of the posh cars.

The actual speed of the vehicles at the instance of image capture is clearly displayed. So, with the car models and their actual speeds at hand, INQUIRER Motoring got in touch with Joel Neilsen, owner and managing director of Safe Drive Training in Australia Pty Ltd that conducts drivers' training in various countries, including the Philippines. Aside from designing motorsports centers, Neilsen's team measures braking distances of various cars every day and at various speeds and road conditions.

Braking distances

With the speeds indicated in the images, Neilsen estimated the braking distances of the cars. Before coming up with the figure, Neilsen had to assume some givens first:

- Only the driver is in the car.
- The car has good tires with correct tire pressures (we assume they do, relative to the luxury class of the vehicles).
- The car has standard original equipment brakes (not upgraded).
- The car is running on good road surface in the dry (NLEX roads are world-class).
- The drivers are skilled (not impaired by fatigue, alcohol/drugs, and not distracted by cell phones).

Neilsen stressed that the usual total stopping distance should include the driver's perception time, his or her reaction time and the vehicle reaction time. However, to keep things simple, the stopping distance we will indicate here only involves the distance traveled between the time the driver steps on the brakes and when the vehicle comes to an actual stop.

So, the white Porsche 911 running at 199 kph will use up 190 meters of road before coming to a screeching halt. This is equivalent to 18 60-seater buses.

A Honda S2000 running at 166 kilometer per hour will have a stopping distance of 100 meters, equivalent to over 9 buses.

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By Charles E. Buban

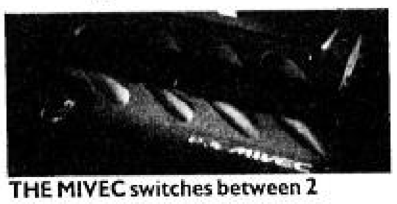
THE UNVEILING OF MITSUBISHI MOtors Philippines Corp.'s ninth-generation Galant—now dubbed the 240M—early this year, is most certainly welcome considering that the model it replaced first rolled out in the market eight years ago.

And the 240M is worth the wait. According to MMPC, this P1.548-million midsize sedan is well-equipped to challenge its well-established competition.

"The 240M is an exclusive design by Mercedes-Benz's former design chief Oliver Boulay. Add a a 2.4-liter, 162 horsepower engine equipped with a Mitsubishi Innovative Valve-timing and -lift Electronic Control (Mivec) technology, this vehicle will set the standard for luxury cars in the Philippines in the years to come," promised MMPC senior vice president for marketing Melchor Dizon.

Global design concept

The 240M, just like the rest of Mitsubishi's current models, carries the car brand's new global design direction initiated by Boulay: a distinctive look featuring a divided grille with prominent chrome Three Diamonds symbol, twin "nostril" grilles with diagonal bars, as well as modern triangular headlamp assemblies.



THE MIVEC switches between 2 different cam profiles.

"The one area where the 240M breaks from the pack is in styling—it's distinctive enough to turn heads in traffic or even while parked. It avoids the boring box-on-box look commonly associated with conservative mid-size sedans," Dizon described.

The 240M has also increased in size (from its predecessors) and with its 4.885-meter overall length, 1.840-meter width, 1.997-meter cabin length and 2.75-meter wheelbase, the sedan also shadows most of its competition.

"Not only is this sedan bigger, the 240M engine is also equipped with Mivec technology that offers superior fuel economy in city driving conditions without sacrificing performance. At lower speeds, the engine intelligently adjusts itself to offer crisp throttle response to allow easy handling through city traffic. But as engine speeds increase, Mivec takes on its sportier side and spreads the power delivery throughout the rest of the rpm range by allowing more air into the combustion chambers. The result is superb acceleration," Dizon explained.

THE 240M has a roomy, comfortable interior.

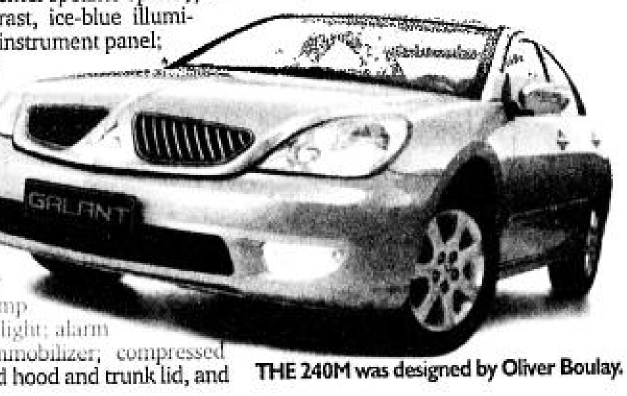
Working hand in hand with the Mivec technology is Mitsubishi's dual manifold catalytic converter (MCC) that significantly reduces the car's exhaust emission while improving low-range engine performance, according to Dizon.

Class-leading amenities

Inside, MMPC gave the 240M class-leading interior amenities including high-grade leather upholstery (an eight-way power adjustable seat is provided on the driver's); integrated CD/MP3/FM/AM entertainment system (with available subwoofer and center speaker option); 3-stage high contrast, ice-blue illuminated full meter instrument panel; provisions for two Isofix child seats; rear parking sensors; high contrast LED (light emitting diode)-type rear combination lamp and third brake light; alarm system with immobilizer; compressed gas strut-assisted hood and trunk lid, and emergency trunk lid release latch.

"The 240M is also one of the safest in the market today (the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration awarded this car a five-star crash rating), thanks to Mitsubishi's Reinforced Impact Safety Evolution (RISE) safety cell that allows the front and rear to crumple upon impact but in contrast, the (passenger) cabin holds its shape and redirects the impact energy away from the occupants," Dizon explained.

With all these high-tech features, Dizon is hopeful that the 240M will help reinforce the company's passenger-car lineup and give the company the opportunity to further improve its total passenger-car market share. He is expecting to sell 600 units by the end of this year (translating to a 10-percent growth in Mitsubishi's luxury cars sales).



THE 240M was designed by Oliver Boulay.

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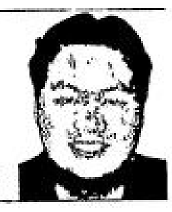


Andre Palma

HAVING BEEN PART OF THE Petron Extra Mile Challenge is something that is proving both to be a blessing and a curse. The good part is that I've put an "end to end" drive of Luzon under my belt, a long-term driving goal that is only going to be eclipsed by the unfulfilled dream of traveling from Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte to Sarangani Province via some sort of automobile.

On the flipside, there is the substantial burden of the volume of queries regarding the purpose and veracity of the entire event. Make no mistake about it, the stories of this year's run will probably fill tome upon tome of record. The advertising it will generate can only be short of overwhelming. It's just that all these stories have to be put in the right light, lest these be used to make extraordinary claims and judgments beyond fact.

The personal impact of such an encompassing journey is one that cannot be denied. All of us changed, in one way or the other, most for the better and some for worse. Driving at least 14 hours a day can, and has taken its toll on even the most veteran of our wheelmen and their co-drivers. Hardship is not a word that should be taken lightly in the context of the Extra Mile Challenge as real and hard a currency as it was during the duration of the drive.

One question is why we left all that was home and sought out such a goal in the middle of a literal wilderness. Selfish as it may sound, I feel a personal need to safeguard the truth about what was achieved—mostly because of what I'd had to give, often reluctantly, for the greater good of the project. Luckily there are those who share in my view.

Critical

One person that was critical to the essence of the entire endeavor of this "mother of economy runs" was Jun Espino of the Automobile Association Philippines, everyone's favorite (?) FIA steward, and a person I consider to be a mentor in this small and often wayward world of cars and driving. Mr. Espino served the event with the sole purpose of being a judge of fact, a disembodied observer in the strictest of notions.

What did he see transpire at this rather astonishing event? Are the claims of such outrageous mileage truth or fabrication? Mr. Espino and those of us who herded the rag-tag bunch of competitors will not stand by anything else but the truth—we will be among the first ones who will cry foul once the very essence of such a trial of endurance and economy is used for purposes other than scrupulous.

Predictable agenda

Why make such a statement in the face of an altogether outstanding achievement in our nation's driving and automotive history? Simple, the run was executed for the purpose of profit and not merely as a test of human and mechanical mettle. There are many players in the mix, each with his own predictable agenda.

The possibilities at the end of more than 2,000 kilometers of the hardest driving I've ever had to do are actually quite frightening. In the wrong hands or in the least conscientious of judgments, everything that all the parties worked for could be jeopardized and rendered a joke. The responsibility rests in all of us to speak the truth and only claim what is based on what happened, not predicted theory.

Let's just hope that all of what was bled from those who took part in what is probably one of the last great driving adventures in our country, is used for the purpose of truth and fact. Otherwise, all the sacrifice—mine include—will have been for naught.

The Civic gets back its mojo

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

IN THE FIRST "THE FAST AND THE FURious" movie some years ago, Vin Diesel and his cohorts were shown driving black Honda Civics in intercepting a container van on the highway. The sequence showcased the high performance capability of the sixth generation (1996-2000) Civic, the fastest variant of which was the 160-ps DOHC VTEC SiR.

However, the Civic brand lost its mojo in its seventh generation. Sure, the 2001-2005 iteration had Honda's advanced engineering, but it looked too sedate. And there was no new Civic SiR to restore the excitement. Soon enough, the Toyota Corolla Altis ("Passion") grabbed pole position from the Civic in the compact car market.

But now, with the intro of the eighth generation Civic, sellers of the Altis and nouveau competitors—the Mazda3 and Ford Focus—have reason to worry. The totally new 2006 Civic was clearly designed to appeal to the emotions with a capital E. As Shinichi Takahashi, project leader of the Honda Civic Development Team, said at the launch last April, "Our aim was to excite the customer by just looking, touching and driving the Civic. We wanted it to be a 'wow' car."

THE PEARL white mica 2006 Honda Civic 2.0 S-L

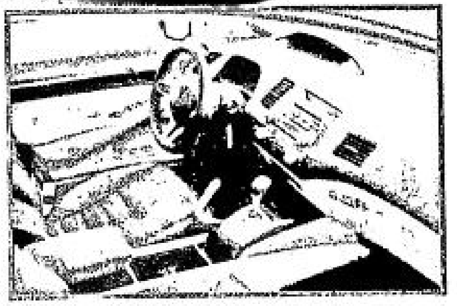
(PHOTOS BY AIDA SEVILLA MENDOZA)

THE 2.0-LITER DOHC i-VTEC engine delivers 155 ps/6,000 rpm.

'Wow' car

Has Honda succeeded in making the Civic a "wow" car? Aside from "exciting," dozens of adjectives have been used to describe its new look, among them "sensuous," "sleek," "athletic" and "muscular." Although not as edgy in design as the European model, the '06 Civic for the Asean market looks like a low-slung sport compact given its rakishly angled windshield, aerodynamically flowing roof, low ground clearance and 50 mm gap between the tires and the fenders. The starkly cab-forward monoform body, short overhangs fore and aft, wide stance, longer wheelbase (2700 mm, only 40 mm shorter than the Accord) not only add to the powerful crouching tiger look, they also increase cabin space for greater riding comfort. As for fit and finish, the new Civic equals if not surpasses the BMWs and Audis.

Moreover, the '06 Civic looks sporty inside as well as outside. In the 2.0-liter S-L variant, the 3-spoke, tilt-adjustable, small-rim steering wheel has race car-style paddles to use after switching from the 5-speed automatic transmission (5AT) to the "S" (Sport) mode. The audio button on the left side of the steering wheel offers fingertip control of the 6-disc CD player with AM/FM radio, MP3/WMA playback and six speakers.



THE FUTURISTIC yet plush and sporty cockpit.

The Civic's interior is luxuriously roomy as well as futuristic, what with the two-level Multiplex Meter, short Z-shaped handbrake located forward beside the gearshift lever, supportive seats (leather in the 2.0 S-L), the flat floor and the panoramic heat-absorbing ultraviolet-reducing glass windows. Metallic accents on the steering wheel, levers and doors enhance the spacecraft look while cupholders and storage cubbyholes with covers abound. Under the front center armrest is a console box with enough space for 27 CDs.

Adrenaline

But it is when you grab the wheel that the new Civic truly gets your adrenaline pumping. The 2.0 S-L, the top-of-the-line Civic, is powered by a high-revving twin cam 2.0-liter 155 ps/6,000 rpm i-VTEC engine mated to a smooth, swift-shifting 5AT. The 2.0 S-L's vaunted top speed is 205 kilometer per hour, so on a traffic-free highway one sunny day it surged to 201 kph without straining and seemed eager to do more. Even at high speeds on the straights and on the twisties, the Civic is stable and surefooted, trace this to the 35 percent increase in torsional rigidity, intelligent Electronic Power Steering (EPS), longer wheelbase, balanced weight distribution and a suspension system featuring reengineered McPherson struts up front with an anti-roll bar and trailing-type double wishbone with stabilizer at the rear. Plus, in the 2.0 S-L, Vehicle Stability Assist (VSA).

Despite the performance orientation of the Civic, its ride quality is cushy enough to please family members of all ages including finicky matrons and grandmothers. Safety-conscious passengers are reassured further by active and passive safeguards. Aside from the aforementioned VSA and ABS with EBD, the 2.0 S-L has four airbags, HID (high intensity discharge) headlamps, fog lamps and power door mirrors with demister that prevents the formation of water droplets. Disc brakes fore and aft, pretensioner seatbelts and dual airbags are standard in all Civics except the 1.8 V.

Summing up, the Civic has definitely got back its mojo. It is a "wow!" car with an exclamation point. Prices range from P767,000 for the 1.8-liter SOHC M/T to P1,102,000 for the 2.0 S-L A/T (add P15,000 if you want the pearl white mica.)

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Hybrid cars: so many miles, so little gas.

Mitsubishi's memorable move; 'mean' Murano

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

RECENTLY, MITSUBISHI ROLLED OUT ITS 50,000th Adventure in Cainta, Rizal. A modest ceremony was held to commemorate the occasion and the guest list included Undersecretary Elmer Hernandez of the Board of Investments and Gov. Casimiro Yñares of Rizal.

In his speech, Kengo Takase, president and CEO of Mitsubishi Motors Philippines, thanked "the government, the BOI, vendors and dealers for the success of the Adventure."

Indeed, for Mitsubishi to reach that plateau is reason for celebration. Not everybody can go that far—50,000 units for just one model.

Mitsubishi started producing the Adventure in October 1997. In December of the same year, the Adventure was in the market.

By the end of 1998, it had total sales of 6,319 units, making Mitsubishi No. 1 in overall vehicle sales that year.

It was an unprecedented, heart-warming, feat for one that had undergone woes of its own due to the Asian-wide economic meltdown in the late '90s.

The accolades for the Adventure won't stop and, in 2004, the vehicle was chosen Best AUV (Asian utility vehicle) of the Year.

By way of expressing gratitude to its customers, Mitsubishi is raffling off the 50,000th Adventure to an Adventure owner who would register his vehicle at any Mitsubishi dealership nationwide.

Other perks offered in the Mitsubishi raffle include five P50,000 cash to five Adventure owners. If you also buy an Adventure GLS Sport Diesel, you get a bonus of P15,000 worth of SM Giftcard.

We all know that Mitsubishi, despite its all-time best-seller Pajero, continues to struggle. But who is not struggling?

The thought, though, that Mitsubishi can still find in its heart the kindness to make its customers happy despite the cruel times uplifts the soul.

If only all the people in our midst would be as kind and as selfless like Takase-san and his MMPC staff to include Mel Dizon, Froi Dytianquin and Arlan Reyes, what a better world we'd be living in.

* * *

How many horses run at full-speed when the Nissan Murano is on the go, I don't want to know.

The Murano is so good at almost everything—speed, maneuverability and instant acceleration—that you'd rather forget asking about how the car has become so wonderfully efficient and just content yourself concentrating on the beauty of driving it.

Listen to Quintin Balajadia, my usually shy spy in the industry: "I can't think of any SUV today that can outperform the Murano. What a magical vehicle it is. Hat's off to Murano."

And I thought the Nissan X-Trail was already a jackpot.

* * *

QUOTE ME. The men in blue from the MMDA still continue to apprehend unsuspecting, UP-bound, private motorists at the corner of Edsa and Quezon Avenue because of a traffic sign that is as invisible as justice for murdered journalists and as incomprehensible as the Thai alphabet.

* * *

Send comments to menju@pldtdsl.net.

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WITH TDI POWER

Audi wins at Le Mans

AUDI AG HAS WRITTEN AN IMportant chapter in the history of motor racing with its historic triumph in the 2006 Le Mans 24-Hour race. The new Audi R10 TDI was the first diesel car to win arguably the toughest car race in the world.

In front of a record crowd of 235,000 spectators, Frank Biela (Germany), Emanuele Pirro (Italy) and Marco Werner (Germany) clinched the sixth and most important Le Mans win for Audi so far. Dindo Capello (Italy), Tom Kristensen (Denmark) and Allan McNish (Scotland) also achieved a podium in finishing third overall.

Impressive demo

The fans all over the world and millions of TV viewers saw an impressive demonstration of Audi TDI Power and the performance of modern diesel engines. The Audi R10 TDI race cars powered by a 650 hp V12 TDI engine were by far the fastest and most economical cars during the entire race.

Le Mans record winner Tom Kristensen drove the fastest lap of the race, setting a 3m 31.211s time, and he was the first driver at the wheel of an LM P1 sports car to cover 16 laps with one fuel load. Audi also set a new distance record of 380 laps over the 13-km circuit.

Along with speed and power, fuel consumption also gave the Audi TDI Power a distinct advantage. The Audi drivers only needed to pit every 14 laps to refuel 90 liters of diesel fuel. The opposition, who relies on gasoline engines, had to pit considerably more. The fans and the media were also impressed on how quiet and environment-friendly a 650-hp sports car can be.

The roll-out of the new Audi R10 TDI took place only 200 days before the race. The victorious diesel race car ran reliably for 24 hours as its predecessor, the R8 that scored five Le Mans victories. The only unscheduled pit stop was carried out at 3:47 a.m. when Audi Sport Team Joest decided to replace the gear cluster after trouble with fifth gear.

Well-oiled machine

Due to very strict ACO regulations, the team was allowed only 10 minutes to replace the gearbox, thanks to its innovative design. One minute was lost for Frank Biela, Emanuele Pirro and Marco Werner on Sunday morning when one of the headlights of their R10 TDI failed. The entire front bodywork had to be replaced. Aside from that, their Audi run like a well-oiled machine during the entire race.

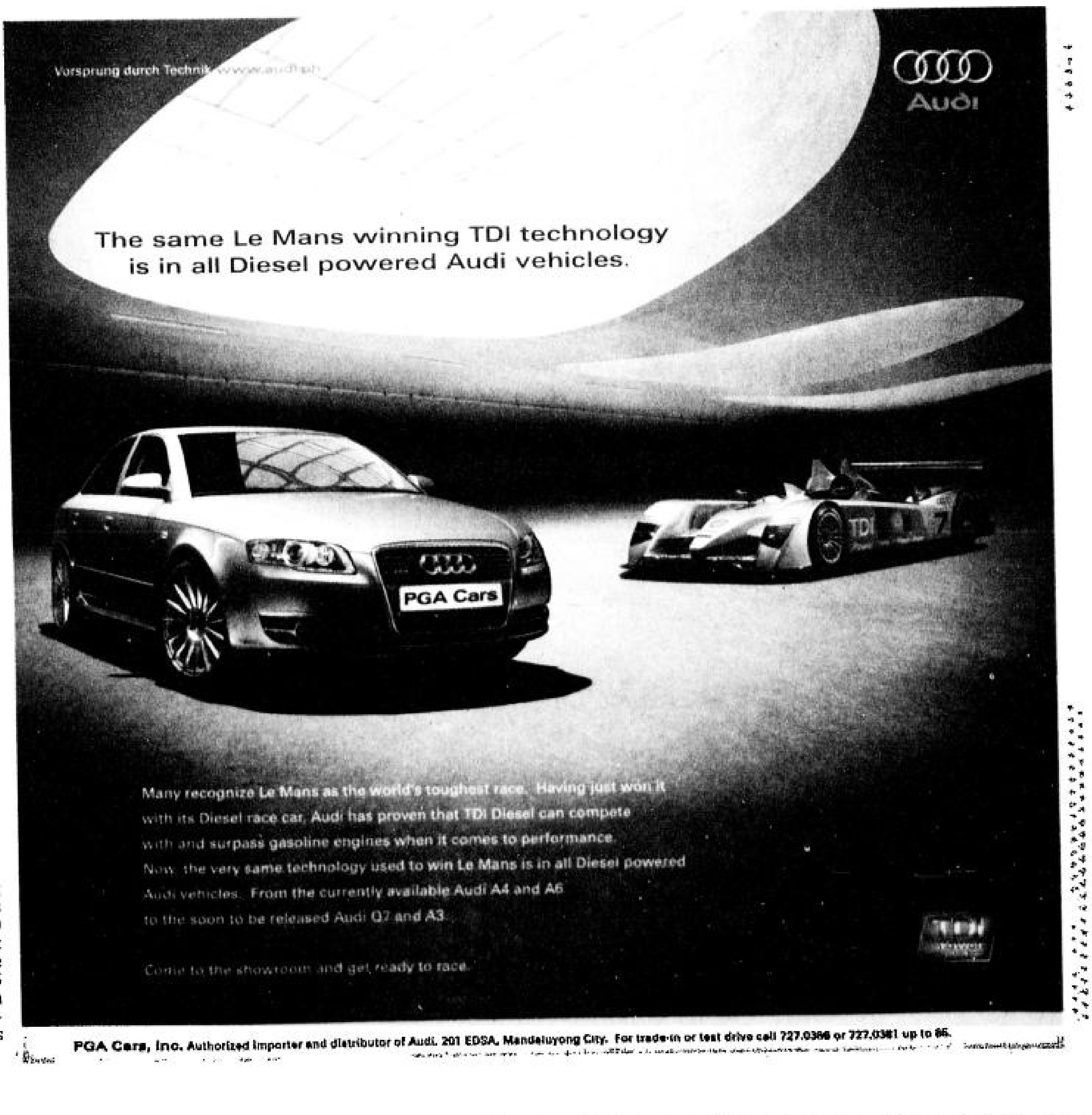
Biela and Pirro celebrated their respective fourth Le Mans victory after 2000, 2001 and 2002. They now rank in fourth position in the historic record charts behind Tom Kristensen, Jacky Ickx and Derek Bell.

6th Le Mans triumph

For Audi, it was the sixth Le Mans triumph and the third in succession. The success of the Bentley Speed 8 from 2003 included, a car that was powered by an FSI engine developed by Audi Sport, Audi technology is unbeaten at Le Mans in seven years.

Audi's triumph was completed by Dindo Capello, Tom Kristensen and Allan McNish who finished third.

After the victory in the Sebring 12-Hour race and in the Le Mans 24-Hour race, the new Audi R10 TDI remains unbeaten. The next challenge is already waiting for the revolutionary race car. From July 15 onward, Team Audi Sport North America will fight for the championship title in the American Le Mans Series with a pair of R10 TDI cars.



Vorsprung durch Technik www.audi.ph

Audi

The same Le Mans winning TDI technology is in all Diesel powered Audi vehicles.

Many recognize Le Mans as the world's toughest race. Having just won it with its Diesel race car, Audi has proven that TDI Diesel can compete with and surpass gasoline engines when it comes to performance. Now, the very same technology used to win Le Mans is in all Diesel powered Audi vehicles. From the currently available Audi A4 and A6 to the soon to be released Audi Q7 and A3.

Come to the showroom and get ready to race.

PGA Cars, Inc. Authorized importer and distributor of Audi. 201 EDSA, Mandaluyong City. For trade-in or test drive call 727.0386 or 727.0381 up to 86.

afp Retirement and separation Benefits system
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City
Telephone Nos. 911-4071 to 80

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Republic of the Philippines
AFP-Retirement & Separation Benefits System

Re-Survey and Topographic Survey of Seven (7) Parcels of Land Located in Brgy. Lancaan II, Dasmariñas, Cavite

1. The AFP RETIREMENT AND SEPARATION BENEFITS SYSTEM (AFP-RSBS), through *the 2006 Corporate Budget approved by its Board of Trustees* intends to apply the sum of Four Hundred Thousand Pesos (P400,000.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Re-Survey and Topographic Survey of Seven (7) Parcels of Land located in Brgy. Lancaan II, Dasmariñas, Cavite. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at the opening of the financial proposals.
2. The AFP-RSBS now calls for the submission of *Letters of Intent (LOIs)* from potential bidders, who are Filipino citizens or organizations with at least 60% interest belonging to citizens of the Philippines, to apply for eligibility and short listing for the Re-Survey and Topographic Survey of Seven (7) Parcels of Land located in Brgy. Lancaan II, Dasmariñas, Cavite. Interested consultants must submit their LOIs by hand, through mail, or facsimile on or before 05 July 2006, 5 pm at *BAC Secretariat Office CMA-C, AFP RSBS Building, Capinpin Avenue, Camp Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City* and secure the Eligibility Documents therefrom. The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on 19 July 2006, 5 pm at the *BAC Secretariat Office CMA-C, AFP RSBS Building, Capinpin Avenue, Camp Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City*. Eligibility check and short listing shall be conducted on 21 July 2006.
3. The BAC shall draw up the short list of consultants from those who have submitted *LOIs* and have been determined as eligible both in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act 9184 (R. A. 9184) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A). Only those that are short listed will be entitled to submit bids. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The short list of prospective bidders shall consist of *five (5)* consultants. The criteria and rating system for short listing are:

ITEM	WEIGHT	RATING	WEIGHTED SCORE
I. APPLICABLE EXPERIENCE (50%)			
a) Completed consulting services of size, complexity and technical specialty comparable to job under consideration, including quality of performance.	(30%)		
b) Other completed consulting services related to the job under consideration.	(10%)		
c) Known cases of prior performance, including quality of work conforming to obligations and cost of services			
II. QUALIFICATION OF PERSONNEL (30%)			
Qualification of the key personnel that may be assigned to the job.	(30%)		
III. JOB CAPACITY (20%)			
Current workload relative to capacity	(20%)		

4. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 and only bids from short listed consultants will be opened. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 the contract will only be awarded to the Highest Rated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.

   The PROCURING ENTITY shall evaluate bids using the *Quality-Cost Based Evaluation (QCBE)* procedure. The criteria and rating system for the evaluation of bids shall be provided in the Instructions to Bidders.
5. Interested consultants may obtain further information from the *AFP-RSBS* at the address given below from *8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday to Friday*.

   AFP-RSBS Bids and Awards Committee,
   AFP-RSBS Building, 424 Capinpin Avenue
   Camp Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City.
   Tel. Nos. 911-40-71 local 266/289/281
6. The contract shall be completed within one hundred eighty (180) calendar days.
7. The *AFP-RSBS* reserves the right to reject any and all bids, annul the bidding process, or not award the contract at any time prior to the contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Asset Enhancement Office
Ms. Alma P. Aban
AFP-RSBS Bldg. 424 Capinpin Avenue
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City
Tel. No. 911-40-71 local 287
Tel./Fax No. 911-21-55

(Sgd.) FRANKLIN C. ACOSTA
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–June 21 & 28, 2006)

STARCM
SUPPORT TO AGRARIAN REFORM COMMUNITIES IN CENTRAL MINDANAO
Project Management Office
3rd Floor ROMA Building, Quezon Boulevard, Kidapawan City 9400
☎ Tel. #: (064) 278-4009 Fax: (064) 278-4252 Email: starcm@philcom.ph

DAR

NOTICE OF VACANT POSITIONS

STARCM is a special Project of the Government of the Philippines funded by the European Union and implemented by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR). The Project provides support for the development of agrarian reform communities in the provinces of Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur. The Project is seeking to fill the following positions with duty station at the Project Management Office in Kidapawan City and in Davao City:

ASSOCIATE ACCOUNTANT (1) Duty Station: Kidapawan City	Must be a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) with a minimum of two (2) years relevant work experience and be familiar with the financial regulations and procedures of government agencies and/or foreign-funded Projects. Should have experience with the preparation of accounting reports/documents and be highly proficient with Microsoft Office software.
PROCUREMENT ASSISTANT (1) Duty Station: Kidapawan City/ Davao City	Applicants should have a Bachelor's Degree in Commerce or a related discipline. Must have at least one (1) year work experience in a procurement-related capacity and have experience with the preparation of pre and post procurement documentation. Experience working with foreign-funded Projects will be a distinct advantage. Must be computer literate and familiar with procurement in Davao City.

Only shortlisted applicants will be notified. Deadline for submission of applications is on 03 JULY 2006.

(Sgd.) GLYNN P. BAKER
European Co-Director

(Sgd.) OSCAR A. MAMA
National Project Director

An application letter, including a resumé detailing duties, responsibilities and relevant experience, and a copy of transcript of records should be submitted to:

The Project Co-Directors
STARCM Project Management Office
3/F ROMA Building, Quezon Boulevard,
9400 Kidapawan City

(PDI--June 21, 2006)

NOTICE OF LOSS

TO : All Provincial / City / Municipal Treasurers; Head of Department; Bureaus, Offices, Agencies and All Concerned
SUBJECT : Lost Accountable Forms #51 (Official Receipts) bearing Serial Number 4081351-400

This is to inform all the above concerned that the 50 pcs. AF #51 of the Municipal Treasurer's Office of Polangui, Albay bearing Serial Number 4981351-400 which was requisitioned by Mr. Gaspar N. Baylon Jr. last January 26, 2004 were found lost since April 2004 at slaughter house.

Said receipts were already declared void and cannot be honored in any transactions representing LGU-Polangui, Albay and any other government entities.

(Sgd.) Anna A. Robrigado
Municipal Treasurer

(PDI–June 21, 2006)

ERRATUM

In the ad of the **Social Security System (SSS)**, re the Notice for Member's Assistance, published last June 17, 2006 in the Classified Section of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, the SSS number of **Mr. Ruben M. Yumang** was inadvertently deleted. His SSS number is **SS#03-0186183-8.**

Our apologies.

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OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory

Eugenia Suarez Atienza

December 3, 1910 - June 22, 1995
Wife of General Rigoberto J. Atienza (†)

Her children Zenaida and David Clymer, Eloisa and Victor Lim, Herminia Atienza-Ilano, Rosalinda and Balbino Hernando, Rolando and Cecilia Atienza, and Josefina Atienza-Salvaña, grandchildren and great-grandchildren invite relatives and friends and readers to remember her in their prayers and to join in the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on Thursday, June 22, 2006 at 6:30 a.m. at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Chapel, Camp General Rigoberto J. Atienza, Libis, Quezon City, and at 9:00 a.m. at graveside at the Libingan ng mga Bayani, Fort Bonifacio, Makati City.

O Sacred Heart, o Love Divine
Make our love so like to Thine.

In Loving Memory
of

Aurora Supnet vda de Verzosa

*on her **1st Death Anniversary** on June 21, 2006*

Masses will be offered at the following:

St. Christopher Parish, Bangar, La Union	6:00 AM
St. Peter Parish, Commonwealth, Quezon City	6:00 AM
Christ the King Parish, Filinvest II, Quezon City	6:00 AM
Sacred Heart Parish, Kamuning, Quezon City	6:00 AM
Holy Family Parish, Kamias, Quezon City	6:00 AM
Sto. Niño Parish, Pandacan, Manila	6:30 AM
Metropolitan Cathedral, City of San Fernando, Pampanga	8:00 AM

Her family requests relatives, friends and readers to remember her in their prayers.

A Message of Thanks

From the family of the late

JUSTICE BERNARDO LLOREN SALAS (Ret.)

who passed away last June 2, 2006

To our dear relatives and friends –
Thank you all for being with us
when we needed you to lessen the pain and sorrow,
for prayers and masses offered;
for flowers and
comforting cards and messages sent;
for consoling,
visits made, and for invaluable contributions given.
We also thank those who could not come but who nevertheless remembered
him with prayers
Thank you and God bless!

"Omnia in bonum!" (St. Paul)

We the family of the late

Mrs. Jocelyn Gurango Hizon

Wish to express profound gratitude for your spontaneous love, sympathy and support at her untimely demise on June 13, 2006.

We find strength and we are humbly grateful to you in knowing that she touched so many lives in her concern for others.

She will continue living on in our hearts and through the lives we lead as testament of her legacy of love.

Thank you very much.

Spouse: **PDIR SERVANDO MINA HIZON**
Children: **Cleo, Joseph, Ava Marie**
Grandson: **Zeus Felix**
Mother: **Mrs. Patricia Gurango**
Mother-in-law: **Mrs. Juliana Mina Hizon**

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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- An Experience in Air Conditioning or its related industry is an advantage
- Knows how to speak fluent Mandarin

Qualified and interested applicants may send their resumé with NBI Clearance, Birth Certificate and Employment Certificate to:

SBMA Labor Department
Subic Bay Freeport Zone
Contact Person: Estelito C. Aliño, Jr.
Personnel Officer
Hitachi Air Conditioning Products (Phils.), Inc.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNICATIONS

LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE

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Memorandum Circular No. 725-2006

14 June 2006

To : **All Regional and Assistant Regional Directors, the Director, LES, Law Enforcement Officers, other Officials and Employees concerned**

Subject : **Banning of LTO decals on motor vehicles**

There has been a proliferation of LTO decals notably on windshields of motor vehicles, including those on public utility vehicles. Further, the practice may serve as subterfuge to evade apprehension for traffic and/or administrative violation/s. Employment of LTO decal as countersign against apprehension, whether real or imagined cannot be condoned by the Office. Hence, it is hereby ordered that the use of LTO decals on all motor vehicles, except on LTO service and patrol vehicles be banned effective immediately.

Further, all LTO law enforcement officers are directed to cause the removal of these decals on vehicles found sporting them. On top of it all, administrative sanction in accordance with law, shall be imposed on any employee found to be engaged in selling or distribution of said decals.

All previous orders/memoranda and other issuances in conflict herewith are deemed superseded.

This memorandum circular shall take effect fifteen days (15) after the filing of three (3) copies hereof with the University of the Philippines Law Center, in accordance with Presidential Memorandum No. 11, dated October 9, 1992 and publication thereof in a newspaper of general circulation.

For guidance and strict compliance.

CERTIFIED COPY
(Sgd.) JOSSIE M. BORJA
Records Officer II

(Sgd.) **ANNELI R. LONTOC**
Assistant Secretary

(PDI–June 21, 2006)

PRIVATIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OFFICE

INVITATION TO BID

Being offered for sale through public bidding, as one whole lot and on an "as-is, where-is" basis, are seven (7) contiguous parcels of land with improvements, covered by various Transfer Certificates of Title (TCTs), with a total area of approximately 14.319 hectares for P143,654,000.00, located at Barrio Makiling, Calamba, Laguna, formerly belonging to Unisol Industries and Manufacturing Corporation (UNISOL).

All offers shall be received, opened and tabulated in the presence of other bidders on 06 July 2006, at 3:00 p.m. at the PMO Conference Room, 6th Floor, 104 Gamboa Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City.

Interested parties may avail of the Asset Specific Bidding Rules (ASBR) and Asset Specific Bidding Form (ASBF) for a nominal fee of PhP500.00 from the PMO Marketing Department, 104 Gamboa Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City.

For more information, please call Mr. John F. Baldemor of the PMO Marketing Department at 817-6331 / 817-8762

(PDI--June 21, 22 & 23, 2006)

AUCTION

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LIVE AUCTION SALE

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Sale Date: Thursday, 29th June 2006 at 10:30am (local time)

At: Premiere Printing Co., Inc. - #18, 1st Avenue, Bagumbayan, Taguig, M.M.
On View: Wednesday, 28 June 2006 from 9am to 5pm and morning of sale date
Refundable Deposit: Php20,000 (upon registration)

Sale includes:
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For further information please contact Chris Major at
Tel: 852 2910 / 11 Email: chris.major@henrybutcher.com

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Rm. 102 JollIland Bldg., 670 Edsa, Pasay City
Tel No.: 852 2910/11 or 834 4917-19 Fax No.: 831 9507
E-mail: manila@henrybutcher.com

ILOCOS NORTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Suyo, Dingras, Ilocos Norte, PHILIPPINES 2913
Tel. Nos. (077) 784-75-46 & 47; 784-71-26
Fax. No. (077) 784-71-25

INVITATION FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION AND FOR BIDS

The Ilocos Norte Electric Cooperative, Inc. (INEC) invites qualified bidders for the long term supply of the INEC's power requirements commencing in the year 2010.

Interested parties shall submit their company profile, duly notarized authorized representative and primary contact person to:

THE GENERAL MANAGER
Ilocos Norte Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Suyo, Dingras, Ilocos Norte

Starting on June 26, 2006 until July 21, 2006.

Only those qualified by the PBAC shall be invited to BID.

(Sgd.) **ROMILLAS C. PASCUAL**
General Manager

(PDI June 19, 20 & 21 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT
Pilar St., Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **Zamboanga City Water District** through its Bids and Awards Committe II (BAC II), invites contractors registered with and classified by the **Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB)** to apply for Eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of the Project : Well Construction for Proposed Pasocaballo Production Well
Location : Pasocaballo Production Well
Brief Description : Well Construction for Proposed Pasocaballo Production Well to include Well Exploration and Well Development
Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) : P854,174.00
Contract Duration : 50 Working Days upon Issuance of Notice to Proceed

Prospective Contractors shall possess a valid PCAB License with a Registration Particular in Water Supply, had undertaken a similar project with an amount of 50% of the proposed project for the bidding, and have key personnel and equipment owned, leased, or under purchase available for prosecution of the project. The List of minimum equipment requirements indicated in the Eligibility Forms. The BAC shall use a non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Checking/Screening as well as in the Preliminary Examinations of Bids. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conferences shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete activities are listed:

BAC ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE
1. Submission of Letter of Intent (LOI) including application for Eligibility	June 19 to June 23, 2006
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	June 19 to June 23, 2006
3. Submission of Eligibility Requirements	June 26 to 30, 2006
4. Submission of Results of Eligibility Check	July 3, 2006
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	July 3 to 7, 2006
6. Pre-Bid Conference	July 10, 2006
7. Submission and Opening of Bids	July 24, 2006

The Eligibility Forms will be available at the 3rd Flr. Zamboanga City Water District, Pilar St., Zamboanga City, upon their submission of Letter of Intent, and upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Eight Hundred Pesos (P800.00), to the Zamboanga City Water District Cashier. Submission and results of eligibility shall be in the same office.

Bid Documents will be available only to Eligible Bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Eight Thousand Pesos (P8,000.00) to the Zamboanga City Water District Cashier.

The Zamboanga City Water District assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidder for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

(Sgd.) **ALEJO S. ROJAS, JR.**
BAC II Chairman

(PDI–June 21, 2006)

PANGASINAN III ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
(PANELCO III)
Nancayasan, Urdaneta City
Tel. No. (075) 5682413; 5682402

INVITATION TO BID

The Pangasinan III Electric Cooperative, Inc. (PANELCO III), in compliance with the guidelines of the Energy Regulatory Commission, invites sealed bids from eligible Bidders to supply a 15.50 megawatt (MW) energy requirement of the PANELCO III franchise area with the option to increase/decrease commencing in 2011. Due to the impending power shortages indicated in the Department of Energy's (DOE) Power Development Plan (PDP), preference will be given to new and clean generation capacity built within the PANELCO III franchise area.

The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the eligible Bidder or the authorized representative from PANELCO III Main Office, McArthur Hiway, Nancayasan, Urdaneta City, Pangasinan, Philippines beginning July 3, 2006. A Pre-bid Conference will be conducted at PANELCO III Board Room at 2:00 p.m on July 12, 2006.

Sealed proposals shall be received by the PANELCO III-PBAC at PANELCO III Main Office on or before 2:00 p.m., July 26, 2006 at which time and place said proposal will be opened and read in the presence of Bidders or Bidders' Representatives who choose to attend. Late submission will not be accepted.

PANELCO III hereby reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any informalities therein and to accept such bid as may be considered advantageous to the cooperative.

Noted by:

(Sgd.) Ms. **NERLE POLICINA**
General Manager
PANELCO III

(Sgd.) Engr. **DINDO S. COLLADO**
ESD Manager
PBAC Chairman

(PDI--June 21 & 22, 2006)

PNOC

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City 1634
Tel. No. 893-1320, Local 5285 and 5282

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

PARTICULAR	APPROVED BUDGET
Various Sizes of Gate Valves under FGJ 60809	PHP 6,892,000.00
Various Sizes of Long Radius Elbows under FGJ 60822	PHP 12,308,000.00
Various Sizes of Casing Head Flanges under FGT 53769	PHP 3,505,000.00
Various Sizes of Casing Head Flanges under FGT 61979	PHP 1,954,000.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o Roderick R. Cabantog and Maria Cristina Lynn M. Mercado starting June 21, 2006, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P400.00 per document.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on June 29, 2006, 2:00 p.m. at the above address

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply, Property and Materials Management Division, at the above address and thereafter dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than 2:00 p.m. (Supply Management Department Office Wall Clock time) on July 13, 2006. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. Late bids shall not be accepted

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee I

(PDI--June 21 & 28, 2006)

PNOC

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Tel. No. 893-1320, Local 5291/5282

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

Various Carbon Steel Pipes	Approved Budget
Under FGJ 60820	PHP 96,493,050.00
Under FGJ 60821	PHP 3,770,000.00
Various Sizes of Expanding Gate Valves	**Approved Budget**
Under FGT 53721	PHP 1,437,000.00
Under FGT 53766	PHP 8,162,000.00
Under FGT 53767	PHP 5,440,000.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o Harold T. Fontillas (CS Pipes) and Maria Cristina Lynn M. Mercado (Gate Valves) starting June 14, 2006, from 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P400.00 per document.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on June 22, 2006, 2:00 p.m. at the above address.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply Management Department at the above address, and thereafter dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than 2:00 p.m. (Supply Management Department Office Wall Clock Time) of July 6, 2006 for FGT 53721 / FGT 53766-67 (Various Gate Valves) and July 13, 2006 for FGJ 60820-21 (Various CS Pipes). Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. Late bids shall not be accepted.

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI--June 14 & 21, 2006)

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Republic of the Philippines

COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS

Manila

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES AND PERIODS OF PROHIBITED ACTS IN CONNECTION WITH THE 01 JULY 2006 PLEBISCITE TO RATIFY THE CHANGE OF NAME OF BARANGAY BITAS TO BARANGAY BERNALDO A. JULAGTING, MUNICIPALITY OF PATNONGON, PROVINCE OF ANTIQUE, PURSUANT TO SANGGUNIANG BAYAN RESOLUTION NO. 001-2006 DATED 13 JANUARY 2006.
x- -x

ABALOS, Benjamin S.	Chairman
BORRA, Resurreccion Z.,	Commissioner
TUASON, Florentino A. Jr.,	Commissioner
BRAWNER, Romeo A.	Commissioner
SARMIENTO, Rene V.	Commissioner

Promulgated: 19 June 2006

RESOLUTION NO. 7675

Pursuant to the powers vested in it by the Constitution, the Omnibus Election Code, the Local Government Code (Republic Act No. 7160), Republic Act No. 7166, and other election laws, the Commission on Elections RESOLVED to adopt, as it hereby RESOLVES to adopt, the following Calendar of Activities and Periods of Prohibited Acts for the July 1, 2006 plebiscite to ratify the change of name of Barangay Bitas to Barangay Bernaldo A. Julagting, Municipality of Patnongon, Antique; to wit:

DATE/PERIOD	PLEBISCITE ACTIVITIES	PROHIBITED ACTS COVERED/INVOLVED
June 19, 2006 (MON) to July 3, 2006 (MON)	**PLEBISCITE PERIOD**	Bearing, carrying or transporting firearms or other deadly weapons in public places, including any building, street, park, private vehicle or public conveyance, even if licensed to possess or carry the same, unless authorized in writing by the Commission. (Sec. 261 (p) (q) (s) OEC as amended by Sec. 32 R.A. No. 7166; Suspension of elective local officials, (Sec. 261 (x) OEC); Transfer of officers and employees in the Civil Service. (Sec. 261 (h) OEC); Organization or maintenance of reaction forces, strike forces or other similar forces, (Sec. 261 (u) OEC).
June 19, 2006 (MON) to July 1, 2006 (SAT)		1. Appointment or hiring of new employees. Sec. 261 (g) OEC); 2. Creation or filling up of new positions. (Sec. 261 (g) OEC); 3. Promotions or giving of salary increases, remuneration or privilege. (Sec. 261 (g) OEC); 4. Construction of public works, delivery of materials for public works and issuance of treasury warrants or similar devices for a future undertaking chargeable against public funds. (Sec 261 (w) OEC); 5. Releases, disbursements or expenditures of public works and social services and development. (Sec 261 (v) OEC); 6. Appointment or use of special policemen, special/confidential agents or the like (Sec. 261 (m) OEC). 7. Use of armored land, water or aircraft. (Sec. 261 (r) OEC); 8. Wearing of uniforms and bearing of arms. (Sec. 261 (s) OEC).
June 19, 2006 (MON) to June 30, 2006 (FRI)	**CAMPAIGN PERIOD**	
June 26, 2006 (MON)	Submission to Comelec of complete list of all special policemen, special/confidential agents or persons performing similar functions in the employ of barangay chairman, municipal mayor or any appointing authority. Last day for appointment of members of Plebiscite Committees	
June 28, 2006 (WED) to July 1, 2006 (SAT)	Posting of the Certified List of Voters as of the May 10, 2004 elections, including all those whose applications for registration and/or transfer of registration records have been approved by the ERB as of the 1st quarterly ERB hearing on April 17, 2006,	
June 30, 2006 (FRI)	Inspection of Polling Places	Selling, furnishing, offering, buying, serving, or taking intoxicating liquor, etc. (Sec. 261 (dd), (1), OEC).
July 1, 2006 (SAT)	**PLEBISCITE DAY**	1. Cockfighting, and other forms of gambling, holding fairs, boxing and/or any other similar sports. (Sec. 261 (dd) OEC)] 2. Giving, accepting free transportation, food, drinks, and things of value (Sec. 89, OEC). 3. Opening of booths or stalls for the sale of merchandise refreshment, etc within 30 meters radius from polling place (Sec. 261 (dd) (2) OEC).
July 3, 2006 (MON)	**LAST DAY OF PLEBISCITE PERIOD**	

This Resolution shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines by the Education and Information Department, and in one (1) local newspaper by the Regional Election Director of Region VI. The Education and Information Department shall likewise furnish copies of this Resolution to the Offices of the Regional Election Director of Region VI, the Provincial Election Supervisor of Antique, the Election Officer of Patnongon, Antique, the Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government, the Secretary of the Department of Education, the Governor of Antique, the Mayor of Patnongon, Antique, the Head of the Deputized PNP and the DepEd Supervisor of Patnongon, Antique. The Election Officer of Patnongon Antique, shall give this Resolution the widest dissemination in his municipality.

The Deputy Executive Director for Operations, assisted by the Director of the Education and Information Department shall implement this Resolution

This Resolution shall take effect upon its promulgation

BENJAMIN S. ABALOS
Chairman

RESURRECCION Z. BORRA
Commissioner

FLORENTINO A. TUASON, JR.
Commissioner

ROMEO A. BRAWNER
Commissioner

RENE V. SARMIENTO
Commissioner

(PDI–June 21, 2006)

BUSINESS

BIR reforms translate to P5.7B in additional taxes

Administrative measures will enable tax agency to meet its full-year goal

By Michelle V. Remo

REVENUE COMMISSIONER JOSE MARIO Buñag has submitted to President Macapagal-Arroyo an outline of administrative reforms that will enable the Bureau of Internal Revenue to collect at least P5.7 billion in additional taxes this year.

Buñag presented the list of measures during the Cabinet meeting on Monday, when the President inquired about updates on the country's fiscal performance.

During the meeting, Ms Arroyo also directed the concerned agencies to work on achieving the government's revenue targets.

In his presentation, Buñag said the BIR would work on raising P700 million in additional revenues from the "Premyo sa Resibo" raffle promo. Under the program, the BIR will electronically raffle off receipts every week starting August, and allow winners to take home P1 million each.

The program is expected to encourage consumers to ask for receipts, and force retailers to issue receipts and pay accurate taxes.

The revenue commissioner also said the BIR could raise as much as P1.9 billion in additional revenues from its "industry benchmarking" program, under which the BIR would compare income tax declarations of several firms, averaging the income and tax payments per industry, to detect tax cheats.

Another P500 million may also be raised form "Operation Accounts Receivables," Buñag said.

Under the program, the BIR will allow delinquent taxpayers to avail themselves of compromise settlements. This is expected to help the BIR immediately raise revenues from long-overdue tax liabilities.

The BIR said it could also generate as much as P1 billion in additional revenues this year through the Relief (Reconciliation of Listings for Enforcement) program. Under the program, the BIR uses third-party sources, such as clients of firms, to detect the accuracy of income declarations made by corporate taxpayers.

Buñag said the BIR could raise as much as P1.2 billion from its surveillance effort, under which it monitors operations of firms suspected of tax delinquency, and another P400 million from its "No Operation Return" project. Under the project, the BIR will investigate the validity of claims of firms that had stopped business operations.

All administrative reforms mentioned are estimated to raise P5.7 billion in additional tax collection this year—an amount that would be enough to compensate for the BIR's P4.2-billion tax collection shortfall in the first five months of the year.

In the January-to-May period, the BIR was tasked with collecting P272.2 billion. But it only turned in P268 billion. In May alone, the BIR supposed to generate P62.23 billion in taxes, but collected only P61.7 billion.

Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran said that, aside from the measures, the BIR is also looking at exerting more effort to collect some P7 billion more from corporate taxpayers that have unsettled tax obligations.

But Beltran said the amount could not yet be factored in the expected additional revenues to be collected, noting that the collection of these unpaid taxes was still uncertain.

Oil deregulation law up for changes, not repeal

By Abigail L. Ho

INSTEAD OF REPEALING RA 8479, or the Downstream Oil Industry Deregulation Law of 1998, Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago is expected to sponsor a bill that will improve the existing law and grant police powers to the Department of Energy.

DOE oil industry management bureau director Zenaida Monsada said that after the deregulation of the oil industry, "the DOE lost its teeth, since many of its powers were removed."

"The bill will basically restore the police powers of the DOE," Monsada said.

To illustrate how powerless the DOE was in ensuring the implementation of its own policies, she cited as an example how the DOE could virtually do nothing to punish violators.

"For instance, before a persistent violator can be closed down by the DOE, we need to make recommendations to the (local government unit)," she said. "We have already recommended a number of establishments for closure, but until now, the LGUs have yet to act on those recommendations."

With the bill that Santiago will like to sponsor, Monsada hopes that the DOE may reclaim likely some of its powers. This means that it may punish violators more easily and almost immediately.

HYUNDAI TUCSON EARNS HIGHEST INITIAL QUALITY RANKING IN ITS SEGMENT

FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif., June 7, 2006 - J.D. Power and Associates announced today that Hyundai is the highest ranked non-premium nameplate in the 2006 Initial Quality Study (IQS) and is ranked third among all nameplates. Hyundai owners had fewer problems with their vehicles than any other non-premium car or truck brand.

In addition to Hyundai's strong overall showing, the Hyundai Tucson earned the trophy for the highest initial quality in the compact multi-activity vehicle (MAV) segment.

Hyundai ranks among the top three nameplates in the study for the first time in the history of IQS, according to the the 2006 Initial Quality Study issued by J.D. Power and Associates. Highlights include a top ranking for the Hyundai Tucson in the compact MAV segment, and top three segment performances for the redesigned Sonata and all-new Azera, as well as the Elantra and Tiburon.

The IQS study measures 217 attributes, including the overall driving experience, engine and transmission, and a broad range of defect and design problems reported by vehicle owners. Hyundai has been steadily improving its non-premium nameplate ranking, ranking third in 2005, up from fourth the previous year.

"Outperforming incredibly outstanding competitors at their own game for the first time in the same year is a major milestone for Hyundai," said Owen Koh, Hyundai's President and CEO. "This ranking demonstrates what tremendous strides we've made in quality, especially with an almost entirely new model lineup. Also very impressive is how well Sonata scored right out of the gate from our new assembly plant and workforce in Alabama."

The Hyundai Sonata ranked third in the highly competitive midsize car segment. Hyundai Motor Manufacturing Alabama (HMMA), which produces the Sonata and Hyundai Santa Fe, finished tenth in plant quality out of 73 plants in North/South America. HMMA's North American plant introduction is among the best in the industry in the last decade.

Hyundai Motor America, headquartered in Fountain Valley, Calif. is a subsidiary of Hyundai Motor Company of Korea. Hyundai cars and sport utility vehicles are distributed throughout the United States by Hyundai Motor America and are sold and serviced by more than 700 Hyundai dealerships nationwide.

Hyundai Motor Manufacturing Alabama, headquartered in Montgomery, Ala., is an independent manufacturing operation of Hyundai Motor Company, based in Seoul, Korea. HMMA currently produces the Sonata sedan and Santa Fe crossover vehicle..At full capacity, HMMA will produce 300,000 vehicles annually.

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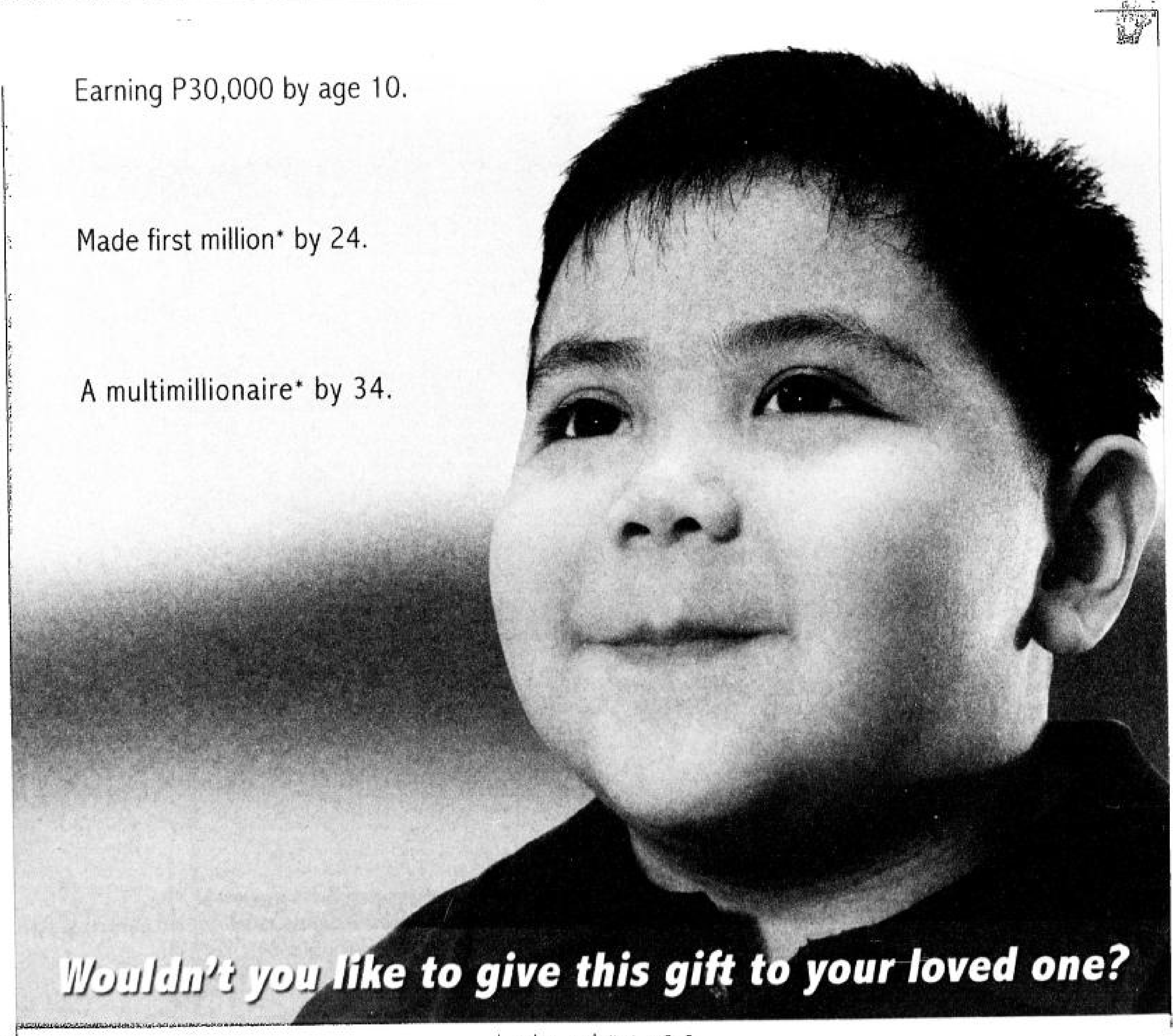
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Working while learning

A working student studies for work and works for studies

By Cheryl Tiu
2bU! Correspondent

EVERY NIGHT, 22-year-old Jasmine Lloren commutes from her hometown in Laguna to go to Makati. About the time when people are getting ready for bed, she works as a customer-care representative for eTelecare Global Solutions.

Lloren's working hours begin at 10 p.m. and continue on until the wee hours of the morning. But Lloren's "day" does not end there. She is also a senior at the University of Perpetual Help in Laguna, where she attends classes in the morning.

Such is the life of a working student: schooling for work and then working for school (and then some)—all in a day.

"Both of my parents don't have any means of income and cannot afford to support my studies anymore," Lloren said. "But I am determined to finish my studies (so) I promised myself that if God gave me a job, I'd take care of it and make the most of all the opportunities presented to me."

Lloren's example is typical of many students today. When parents can no longer pay for their kids' tuition, young people work to earn enough money for their education.

This is especially common in the United States and Canada, where young people work part-time while completing their education.

Last summer, 22-year-old Sandra Seifert of New York worked as a bartender at the French-Vietnamese restaurant Bao, and as a note-taker for disabled students at her alma mater, Borough of Manhattan Community College.

"I moved out of my aunt's place (where I was staying when I first moved to New York) so I need to pay my rent," Seifert explained. "I also wanted to be more independent, meet new people and discover more about myself and my capabilities."

While Seifert's salary usually goes to pay her rent, bills, food, transportation cards and phone cards (so she can call her boyfriend in London), the rest goes into her savings account.

Business

Twenty-two-year-old Ryan Chua, an incoming senior at Ryerson University in Toronto, juggles two jobs—as a customer-service representative for Sears Canada and as an administrative assistant for an immigration lawyer—while remaining a scholar on a full-course load last semester.

While Chua lives with his sisters and his tuition is covered by scholarship, he decided to work to earn pocket money and to gain experience.

"It's the satisfaction of knowing you're an adult now and can handle your responsibilities with organization and maturity," he said. "Plus, the paycheck and purchases you're going to make with it afterwards. I worked three months at a department store and now I'm in Manila visiting my family and my girlfriend."

In the Philippines, students who want to have jobs outside of the call-center industry end up contributing to the print media, designing bags and accessories, and photographing and styling photo shoots.

Twenty-two-year-old De La Salle University Manila senior Angela See put up her own store, Sack in 50th Avenue, at Robinsons Galleria last November, with her business partner Kate Chua. The store sells trendy clothes and shoes.

"Having a source of income independent from the allowance given to me by my parents is liberating," See said. "[But] so far, all the money has gone to my ever-expanding closet, much to my dad's dismay!"

So what has work taught them?

"Time management is key. Little things like leaving your iPod at home so you can do your homework when you're in the car or subway instead, can make a difference," See said.

"Money doesn't come easy (so) I learned to value the money I earned," Seifert said. "We should always remember that our parents work hard to send us to school and we should not take our families for granted, financially."

Chua, Lloren, See and Seifert said they recommend that young people work while studying, just as long as school remains the top priority.

The independence, the sense of accomplishment at the end of each day, the interaction with different people—these have helped them broaden their horizons and learn more about themselves.

"It will definitely build your self-confidence and help you realize just how much our parents do for us," Seifert said.

"At the same time, money can be great, and you can learn how to balance the different priorities in your life," Chua said.

There is so much to learn beyond the walls of the classroom, and these working students are doing just that. They are learning how to live.

E-mail the author at chloe_dominique@yahoo.com

JASMINE Lloren, University of Perpetual Help, Laguna

RYAN Chua, Ryerson University

ANGELA See, De La Salle University

SANDRA Seifert, Borough of Manhattan Community College

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2BU! THERMOMETER

The World Cup, Keys Me, cinnamon twists and other things that are rocking our world

FIFA WORLD CUP

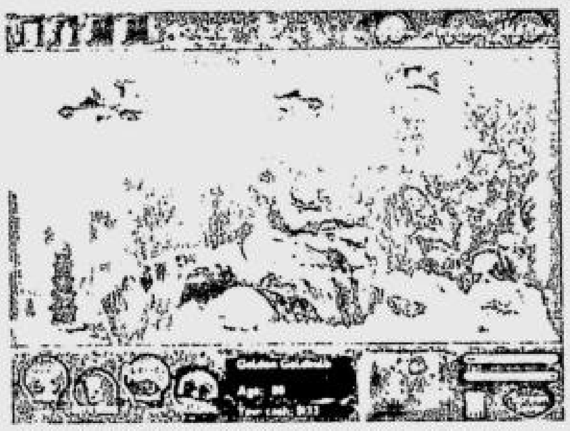
WORLD CUP. Sure, there's no Philippine team, but that hasn't stopped Pinoys from getting high on World Cup fever.

TACO BELL'S CINNAMON TWISTS. They're little bites of heaven, especially when dipped in the chocolate sauce that comes with Taco Bell's Churros. And they're crazy cheap, too—P20 for one order.

EGG. EGG in Glorietta (across Kwang Tong) has become one of our favorite new hangouts. That's where we go online, enjoy a bit of karaoke and order yummy cheese sticks. But our favorite thing to do in EGG is play Xbox and Playstation games on its big TV screens. There's nothing like beating up your Tekken rival on the big screen.

BIT TORRENT (www.bittorrent.com). If you haven't jumped on the bandwagon, you're missing a lot. It's the fastest and easiest way to get albums, movies, and the latest episodes of your favorite shows hours after they air. Yowza.

MILO SOFT SERVE ICE CREAM. It's a P10 treat. Check it out at convenience stores and your favorite malls.



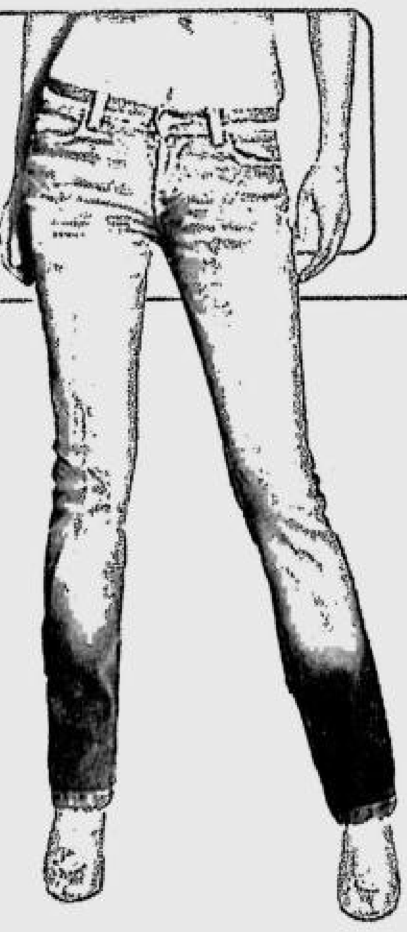
FISH TYCOON. You know you're addicted when you spend hours in front of your PC adjusting your PC's clock in order to cheat in the game.

UNLIMITED TEXT MESSAGES. Yes, we enjoy being able to text everyone (everyone using the same service provider, that is) for free. But not the flood of unbelievably corny jokes and sappy messages that hit us every day.

"THE LAKE HOUSE." We were ready to hate it, because we loved "Il Mare," the Korean film it was based on. But "The Lake House" had its own charms. We loved it, and judging by the screams inside the cinemas (we've seen it twice), a lot of other people loved it, too.

COPS ALONG EDSA/AYALA. One's standing in the middle of the island with a sign that says "*Bilis-bilisan lang po.*" We think it's just funny that he's getting paid to just stand there and hold up that sign.

SKINNY JEANS. These '80s-inspired jeans were back for a while, but due to their largely unflattering nature (only, well, skinny girls could wear them), they quickly went out of style. Not good for a nation of predominantly full-sized hips.



NO FETE DE LA MUSIQUE? Next to our birthdays and Christmas, Fete de la Musique is one of our most-awaited events of the year. But what happened to this year's Fete de la Musique? Music lovers want to know.

BENCH FASHION SHOW. The stage will sizzle on June 30 as models and celebrities take over Araneta Coliseum for Bench Fever. And because Bench is tapping big names in style and fashion, this year's show promises to be bigger and hotter.

SELECTA LITE. What is better than enjoying a scoop of ice cream? Enjoying a scoop of fat-free ice cream, especially if the flavor isn't sacrificed. We love the Double Dutch and Rocky Road flavors.

SPIRAL BUFFET. It's the Battle of the Buffets, and food lovers are enjoying it. The new contender, The Philippine Plaza's Spiral, has been flexing its muscles these past weeks, serving up delicious dishes in different stations. We love the pizzas, the paella, the tempura and the dimsum.

"GREY'S ANATOMY." We wish we had our own McDreamy. Yummy.

DANE COOK
retaliation

DANE COOK. This guy brought comedians back to rock-star status. By all means, get your hands on his stand-up album, "Retaliation."

MAX BRENNER'S NEW OFFERINGS. We no longer go to Max Brenner just for the chocolates. Oh no. We go there for the pizzas and the burgers. Check out Max Burgers; the Barbecue Burger is our favorite. Order it with a side of onion rings and a Chocishake. The Max Brenner Pizzas have a different twist. The crust is flaky, almost croissant-like. Try Under the Sea, Big Fat Greek and Arugula and Garlic. But Cinque Formaggi—five-cheese pizza—is our number one.

KEYS ME. Viva Hot Babe Alyssa Alano must have been dreaming of fame for a long time. But we bet she never thought she'd get famous for a YouTube video (at least not a porn one). The past days, thousands and thousands of amused Internet-savvy Pinoys have been watching a clip of her botching up the song "Kiss Me" on a local TV show. Boo to whoever it was who convinced her it was okay to take to the stage even if she didn't know the song she was about to sing.

ONLINE SCAM ARTISTS. Thanks to Multiply and different Internet forums, shopping online has never been easier, even if you don't have a credit card. The steps are simple: you choose what you want, contact the seller, deposit the money to his or her bank account and, soon, Mr. Air21 comes knocking on your door. Some people choose to meet up with the sellers, too, and that works, unless you ordered goods from an online scam artist. Watch out for them (to quote Snowhite from Girltalk, "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is"). Before ordering, make sure the seller has received feedback from other successful buyers.

GAS PRICES. At P43 a pop, that's got to hurt the country.

BUSES AND THE "YELLOW BUS LANE." Us with private vehicles will very much stay off your lane... if only you would stop swerving onto our lanes like you're in some chase scene in an action movie. You don't own the road, big evil buses.

KEVIN FEDERLINE. He's no longer jobless. Presenting, the spokesperson of Blue Marlin Clothing. Blue Marlin what? Exactly.

Makeup's latest treats

Mysterious beauty

To create a flawless and base, Uchiide-san used the UV Underbase Mousse all over the face. He then used Depsea Perfect Foundation for a dewy finish.

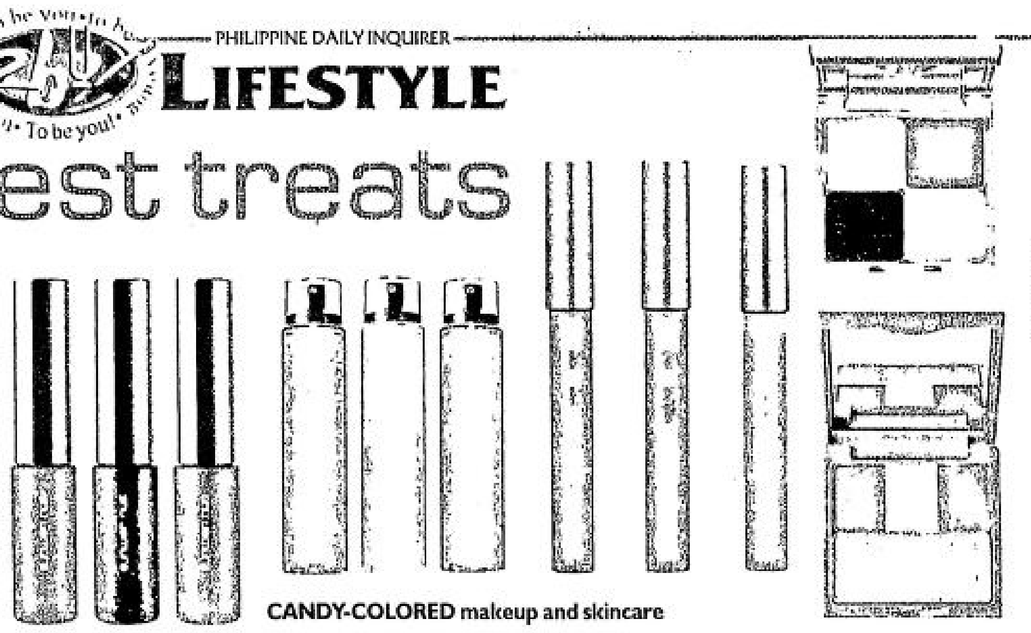
Using Precise Eyeshadow Shades, Uchiide-san used Pressed Eyeshadows in M Orange 250 all over the top lid for a natural look. He then used M Blue 650 and P White 900 under the lids for a simple yet eye-catching effect.

Uchiide-san used the Water Droplets pair of lashes from the new Tokyo Lash Bar.

Uchiide-san topped lips with Lolishine Reflects in 348 for a natural and feminine pout.

Uchiide-san used Glow On in P Wine 23 for strong yet natural looking cheeks.

MAKEUP KAKUYASU UCHIIDE, SHU UEMURA INTERNATIONAL CHIEF MAKEUP ARTIST
HAIR JANET DE RAMA USING KIEHL'S STYLIST SERIES
MODEL JOY HENDRICKSON



CANDY-COLORED makeup and skincare

By Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Mark Nicdao

IF KAKUYASU UCHIIDE, RIGHT-hand man of Japanese cosmetics giant Shu Uemura, had his way, more Filipinas would be experimental with their makeup. "Many of the women here have a good sense of fashion, but they don't apply the same philosophy with their makeup," he said. "The ladies should discover more looks and try new things."

Uchiide, one of the world's top makeup artists (his work is quite popular on the international runways), is known for his cutting edge looks, but still believes in the basics: "I believe that the base is still the most important part of makeup; without a good base, everything else falls. You don't even have to use a lot of foundation to look good; less is always more, so a soft look with blush and eyeliner can make a big difference."

For unusual colors and concepts that never fail to impress, makeup lovers might want to try Shu Uemura's Boutique Birthday collection, which mimics elements found in nature.

Its latest offering (marking the 23rd anniversary of the opening of Shu Uemura's first beauty boutique in Tokyo) is inspired by water and vibrant summer colors present in commonly found Japanese art elements such as peaches, peonies, bamboo and water droplets.

The star of the collection is, as always with Shu Uemura, the makeup palette. This season's offering is the eyeshadow quad which contains four colors, namely Momo (peach

MAKEUP'S/ C4

Sun-kissed glow

EYES: Xeng used the Amber and Nature Palette's three eyeshadows together for this year's sun-kissed look. All over the lid she used the Nude shade with the darker Sunset on the upper lids for contrast. And on the undereye she used the Azure shade for high impact.
LIPS: Xeng topped lips with Lolishine Rouge in 948.
CHEEKS: Xeng used the Coral Flush Glow On from the palette for a natural bronzed flush.

MAKEUP XENG ZULUETA, SHU UEMURA, PHILIPPINES CHIEF MAKEUP ARTIST, USING SHU UEMURA'S "AMBER AND NATURE" SUMMER COLLECTION 2006

Uchiide's makeup tips:

1. Base makeup is very important, but put only what you need. A common mistake that many women commit is to put too much foundation in places where they don't need it—the tendency is for the skin to look chalky and unnatural. What matters is the shade of foundation and the way you apply it. Even out your skin, do not cover it.
2. Beautiful makeup starts with beautiful skin. Invest in skincare and always make sure you remove every bit of makeup before going to sleep.
3. The undereye and cheek area are the most important parts in makeup application. It's the biggest area of your face, the one that people notice immediately. Make sure to keep the skin there clear and that the circulation is good to get a natural, rosy flush.
4. Stay away from concealer that is too light as it looks grayish. Match your concealer and foundation as much as possible.
5. Don't contour your face in hopes of looking thinner. Achieve a thinner face by drawing your eyebrows correctly.
6. Do not put your blush on the apples of your cheeks unless you want to look fatter. Apply blush just under the apples, but softly—you don't want to look severe. Blush should be put where the jaw and skull meet; the natural line of your cheek is where you should put blush.
7. Try to experiment with trends. Makeup shouldn't always be metallic and shimmery, and lip color shouldn't always be glossy. Try matte once in a while, or line your eyes with colored liquid eye liner.

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6. Draws will be held on July 3, July 17, July 31, August 14, August 28, 2006. Grand draw will be on Sept. 8, 2006.
7. All entries are cumulative. Non-winning entries will qualify for the succeeding draws. The more entries sent, the more chances of winning.
8. Cut-off dates for entries Sunday, 11:59pm prior to the draw date. For the Grand Draw, cut-off date will be on July31, 2006 at 11:59pm.
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ILLUSTRATION: ANTHONY MISTADES

Entertain yourself while stuck in traffic

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

WHEN YOU ARE STUCK IN traffic on your way to school and sleep won't come or your iPod is simply not enough to rid you of boredom, here are some inside-the-car activities that might just do the trick.

Count how many Ellen Lising billboards there are or sing along with Vina Morales on her Enerva radio spots

- Come up with a phrase using the letters of other cars' plate numbers.
- Invent meetings/situations or provide dialogues for truck drivers, families and bus passengers that you come across.
- Make goo-goo eyes with cute passengers.
- Count how many 7-Eleven stores or Ellen Lising billboards there are from point A to point B.
- Take a picture of hilarious posters and signage with grammatical errors.
- Tune in to a radio station that plays extremely cheesy love songs or ridiculous novelty songs and discover how many you know by heart.
- Sing along, learn or memorize extremely cheesy love songs or ridiculous novelty songs.
- Pick out the best radio ads and jingles (I nominate the Enerva ad making good use of Vina Morales's vocals.)

You talkin' to me?

By Gmeleen Faye B. Tomboc
2bU! Correspondent

LIKE MOST STUDENTS, YOU probably might have spent your summer zoning out in front of MTV and resting your brain from all things serious. If you think you need some tuning up for the start of yet another year of classes, why not join your school's debate club?

As I learned from watching the INQUIRER Inter-Collegiate Debating Championship (IIDC), debates are an effective way to sharpen speaking and analytical skills. And better yet, it's also a great way to meet different kinds of people from all walks of life.

A joint project of the University of the Philippines Debate Society and this paper, the IIDC is now on its fifth year of bringing together debaters from all over the Philippines. Around 300 participants converged in UP Diliman, with some coming from as far away as Mindanao State University-Marawi and Ateneo de Davao.

With topics ranging from "Should consensual cannibalism be legalized?" to "Should the gay community resent the gay cowboy's debut in mainstream media?" this year's tournament was as entertaining as it was brain-wracking. I hadn't seen a debate since I last joined one three years ago, but I still recognized some familiar faces.

Carl Ng of UP, winner of the IIDC two years ago, and Franco Larcina of University of Santo Tomas, veteran of the World Universities Debating Championships, were on hand as adjudicators.

The format—Asian Parliamentary—was still the same. Two teams with three members each squared off for one round. Each team was given only about 30 minutes to prepare for a given topic. Speakers were given seven minutes each to define the problem, present their arguments and demolish their opponents' cases.

All the while, debaters could stand up and raise points of information during the speeches of their opponents. Finally, each team would give its reply speech—essentially a biased adjudication.

Each of the 52 participating teams went through seven of these rounds to determine the top 16 teams. Over the week, as more teams were eliminated, the top two teams ended up debating for 11 gruelling rounds each. Imagine debating all day, for five straight days!

SUCCESSFUL debaters pose with their trophies

THE RIVETED audience

There's a lot of arguing and heckling in a debate, but even more partying

FAREWELL hugs

I hadn't expected the debating community to be so tight-knit, though. Even as opposing teams practically breathed fire, rolled their eyes and heckled each other during the IIDC, these same debaters could be seen good-naturedly exchanging high-fives in between matches.

Halfway through the week, participants partied the night away at Dish, with Stonefree in attendance. On the last night, they all trooped to Celebrity Sports Complex for the farewell dinner. Mock awards like Oldest Dinosaur and even an award for most popular couple were voted on. Also, the atmosphere was now more relaxed. Debaters were no longer garbed in suits and high heels, but were in short sleeves, miniskirts and sneakers.

Champions

Eventually, Ateneo romped off with the championship. The team of Sharmila Parmanand, Lisandro Claudio and Charisse Borromeo successfully defended their affirmative stance on the motion "This house believes that nationalism is the enemy of the anti-war movement."

John Reilly Baluyot, Eric Javelloza and Cyris Ng of UST settled for second place. Sharmila also took home the Best Speaker award for the whole tournament, while teammate Charisse was adjudged Best Speaker for the Championship Round.

Also awarded was Celeni Kristine Guinto of UP Diliman, who will represent our country in the English Speaking Union International Public Speaking Competition to be held in London (the same event which Patricia Evangelista won two years ago).

At the end of the tournament, the participants lingered on, hugging their new friends, exchanging phone numbers and promising to keep in touch. Nicolo Cabrera, tournament director, thanked sponsors like Load Central and Promoting English Proficiency together with English Is Cool, Coca-Cola Exporters Corp., and SPI Technologies.

But in the end, his biggest thanks went to the debaters themselves, who spent months in training and a week of their precious summer vacation just to take part. As the tournament demonstrated, debating may not just be a way to tune up for serious schoolwork, but a way to gain new friends.

If you're interested in debating this school year, log on to http://debate.uvm.edu/default.html, or contact your school's debating organization.

Warming up for school? Try Sudoku

By Leslie Ann C. Tan
2bU! Correspondent

FINDING IT HARD TO SWITCH BACK into school mode? Still dreaming about the beach?

Well, it's time to hit the books. Warm up your mental muscles with the new phenomenon sweeping the Internet, bookstores and even invading daily newspapers. It's an addicting craze called Sudoku.

Sudoku comes from a Japanese translation meaning "only single numbers allowed."

It's hard to trace when the puzzle was first invented, but it grew in popularity in 1997 when a retired judge from New Zealand convinced The Times of London to publish it in the daily.

With the 1st World Sudoku Championships over in Italy just last March, Sudoku is on its way to dethrone the classic crossword puzzle as being "the" puzzle of this generation.

The rules are simple. You start off with a 9x9 grid. Each row, each column and each quadrant (3x3) must contain the numbers one through nine.

No need to do any math. It's just pure straight logic. While the simplest Sudoku puzzles may take just a few minutes to solve, the advanced ones may take days.

Can you do sudoku?

			7		6			
	1	7		9			6	2
	6		3	5				7
1	9		2	3				6
7			6			2		
	8	2		1	7	9		
	3		1			5	7	
		1	9				2	3
		5			3		8	

3	4	8	7	2	6	1	9	5
5	1	7	8	9	4	3	6	2
2	6	9	3	5	1	8	4	7
1	9	4	2	3	8	7	5	6
7	5	3	6	4	9	2	1	8
6	8	2	5	1	7	9	3	4
4	3	6	1	8	2	5	7	9
8	7	1	9	6	5	4	2	3
9	2	5	4	7	3	6	8	1

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Makeup's latest treats

From page C3

and gold), Yuzu (citrus with silver pearls), Bamboo (matte green) and Kyoho (blue grapes).

Also worth trying out is the Sheer Lip Pencil Trio, which contains three lip gloss pencils—a new development in makeup—in shades of Botan pink, Vermilion red and Akebono beige.

Want to be extra playful? Check out the Shimmer Kits in Bronze and Glitter, which contain mini face powders packaged with Lustre Gel. It's the best way to extend your summer tan without spraying on tanning solutions.

And in line with opening of the Tokyo Lash Bar, Shu Uemura has also included a new design for lashes, mimicking the look of water droplets caught on your lashes.

Finally, fans of the Depsea Water sprays will love the latest variants, also inspired by citrus, bamboo and flowers. The Depsea Water sprays are a good pick-me-up with their delicate scents and skin-saving properties.

Still fresh on counters is the Amber and Nature summer collection. Again, the star of the collection is the palette, which contains a palette with three eye shadows (two neutral shades, plus one blue) and a pinky-coral blush. Also worth checking out are their liquid eye liners (which dry to a smudge-proof vinyl finish), lipsticks and nail varnishes. Kakuyasu Uchiide, chief makeup artist of Shu Uemura, shows 2bU! readers several wearable but glamorous looks with the Amber and Nature collection and the Tokyo Lash Bar.

For this shoot, Uchiide demonstrated his signature makeup style (classy, clean and well-thought of) and shared some makeup tips for 2bU! readers. "Veer away from the norm," he advised young makeup buffs. "Never be afraid to try anything unusual."

Email the author at biancaconsunji@yahoo.com

Dwyane Wade's 24- hour suit. He won best dressed at the ESPN ESPYs. Not bad for a day's work.

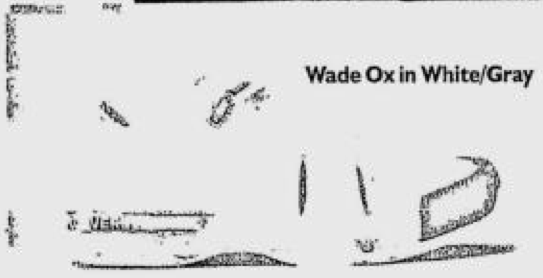
The Flash's Dwyane Wade Saves The Day For Miami Heat

Wade dunking with his All-Star signature shoes.

With the tally now at the ongoing NBA finals at 3-2 in favor of Miami, there is no stopping Dwyane Wade. With a total of 121 points in the last three games, Wade proves to be Miami Heat's deadly weapon. Ever since his drafting from Marquette, where he was a varsity player, Wade signed up with Converse as its endorser. In autumn 2005, the first Converse Wade signature basketball shoes was introduced worldwide, thus marking Wade's long-term partnership with Converse. Listed below are some of the notable press that Dwyane Wade has been receiving.

As a member of the Miami Heat, the diminutive guard (well, he's generously listed at six feet four, but that's still more or less tiny by NBA standards) is considered to be one of the best young basketball players in the world. Actually, he's deemed one of the best players, period—regardless of age.

-John Gonzales, American Way



Wade Ox in White/Gray

That's when Wade, playing with five fouls and conjuring memories of Michael Jordan's playoff miracles, decided it was time for him to take over.

- Associated Press

Of all Dallas' problems, Wade is on top of the list.

- Associated Press

Wade Mid in Gray

Dwyane Wade in a Black Dapper Suit.

Nobody should be talking about LeBron James or Carmelo Anthony. They should be talking about Dwyane Wade. It's a crime. James rates as an average NBA player. That's good since very few rookies rate that high. But Wade's a real impact player for Miami. He ranked 21st best in the league in terms of changing the chances of your team winning a game. We don't care if you never score a point. If you make plays and help your team win, you don't have to score."

- Wayne Winston, professor of decision sciences,
Indiana University Business School and co-founder of WinVal,
a complex set of mathematical formulas designed to rate the efficiency of NBA players.

Wade is famous enough now that, just like big-body, big-personality teammate Shaquille O'Neal, he is deemed worthy of a one-word moniker. And his is unquestionably cooler than Shaq's. Wade goes by Flash, same as the comic-book character, the one too fast to see, too agile to stop. You can't fake the funk and still have people name you after a superhero, dig?

-John Gonzales, American Way

Miami Heat guard Dwyane Wade will top the league's best-selling jersey list when it is released Thursday. The list includes sales from the NBA store in Manhattan and on NBA.com from the last three months. Philadelphia 76ers guard Allen Iverson ranks second and James ranks third.

Dubbed "Flash" for his quick moves on the court, Wade's charisma off the hardwood has made him one of the league's most marketable superstars. He has endorsement deals with Converse, Sean John and Topps, and he will appear in a Gatorade commercial in February. The 23-year-old has been featured on the cover of "NBA Live '06" as well as in countless magazines, including People, which named him to its "50 Most Beautiful" list in April.

Wade's shoe, the "Wade", is the fifth most popular signature basketball shoe behind shoes bearing the names of Anthony, Tracy McGrady, James and Michael Jordan, according to SportsScanINFO, a market retail tracking firm. The shoes, retailing at $90, were the second best-selling shoe on Amazon.com from Nov. 1 to Nov. 22, according to the Web site.

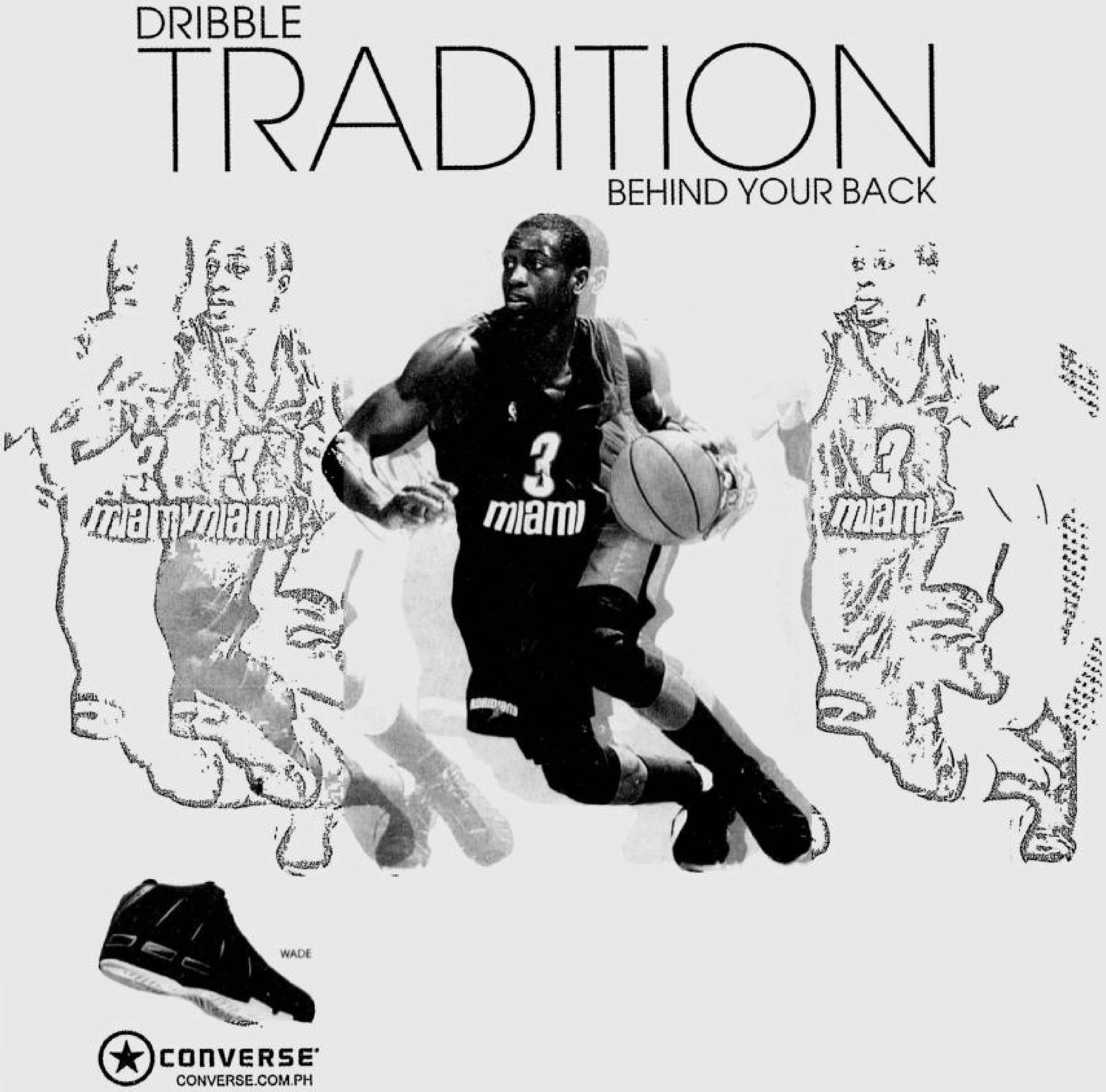
Wade currently ranks fifth in the league in scoring, with 26.7 points per game. Wade also ranks third in the league in steals and 12th in assists.

- Darren Rovell, ESPN.com

Twelve months after his breakout performance in the postseason, Miami's Dwyane Wade has made an even bigger jump: to headline act of a star-studded NBA Finals.

-Chris Ballard Sports Illustrated

Wade Mid in Gray



Converse and U2's Bono unite to fight poverty

This year, Bono (U2 lead singer, DATA co-founder, Time magazine person of the year 2005) and Bobby Shriver (chair of DATA — Debt, AIDS, Trade, Africa) used the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland to launch RED.

RED is an economic initiative that aims to deliver a sustainable flow of private sector money to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

RED is not a charity or "campaign".

Bono said, "Philanthropy is like hippy music, holding hands. Red is more like punk rock, hip hop, this should feel like hard commerce."

RED was created to engage the private (or corporate) sector in the fight against AIDS in Africa.

Companies such as Armani, American Express and Converse whose products take on the RED mark contribute a portion of profits from the sale of that product to the Global Fund to finance AIDS programs in Africa, with a focus on women and children.

The Chuck Taylor All Star African Mudcloth Shoe (available in March 2006) is designed with acclaimed UK designer Giles Deacon—in neon orange, neon yellow or neon pink accents.

Converse was inspired by Nakunte Diarra, a renowned mudcloth artist and storyteller since the 1950s who originates from Mali, to fully understand the art, symbolism and technique of Bogolanfini, a mud-dyed cloth of the Bamana people of Mali.

Bogolanfini is a living art form, constantly changing, reflecting new inspirations, while paying homage to the past.

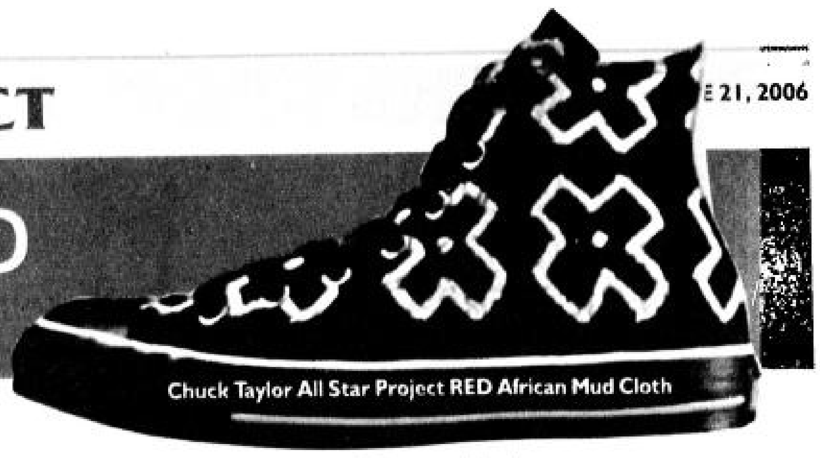
Artists use techniques passed down through generations and motifs, which express the individual style and creativity of the artist, are based on well-known geometric patterns.

Bogolanfini is an essential part of the Bamana people's lives, marking major life transitions, marriage, birth, excision and death.

The Converse RED mudcloth shoe is an original work of art created to combine fashion and social consciousness to celebrate and preserve African culture and creativity.

This shoe will "kick off" an entire series of Converse RED Collection shoes.

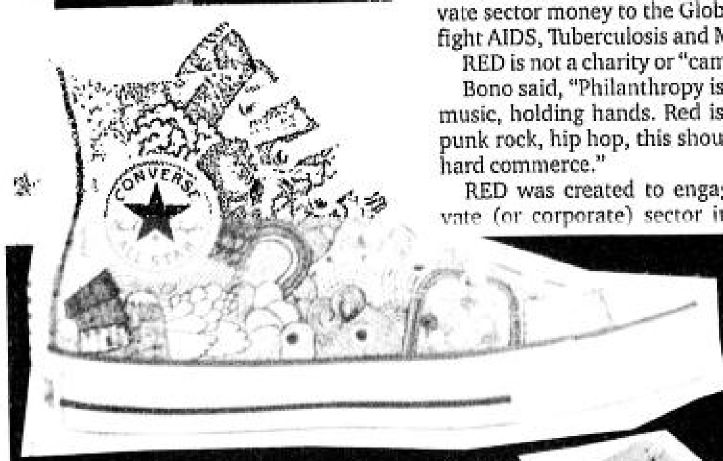
Converse RED will officially launch in the United States for Holiday 2006. The company states it will "continue to inspire originality and freedom of thought among Converse enthusiasts and beyond."

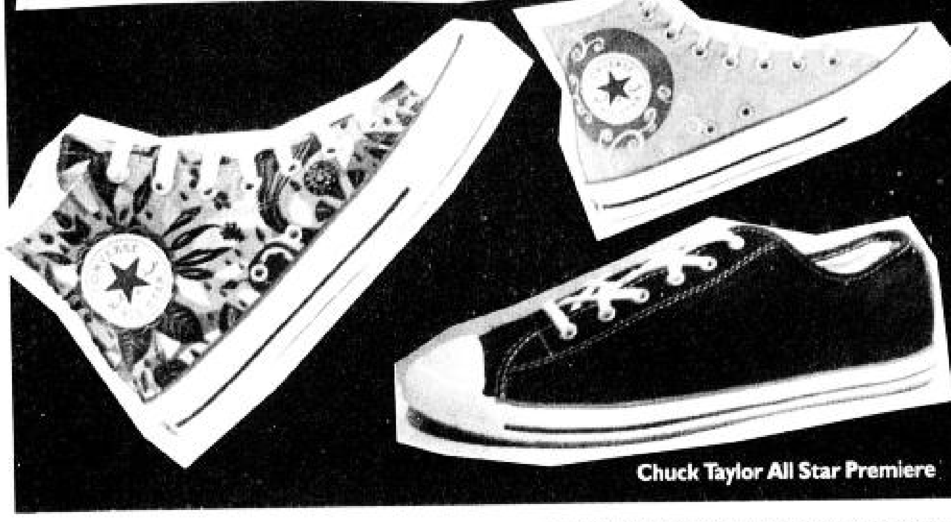


Chuck Taylor All Star Project RED African Mud Cloth

CONVERSE UNVEILS NEW OFFERINGS

CONVERSE PRODUCT DEMOCRACY





Chuck Taylor All Star Premiere

Athletic and action-sports companies are embracing their inner Van Goghs.

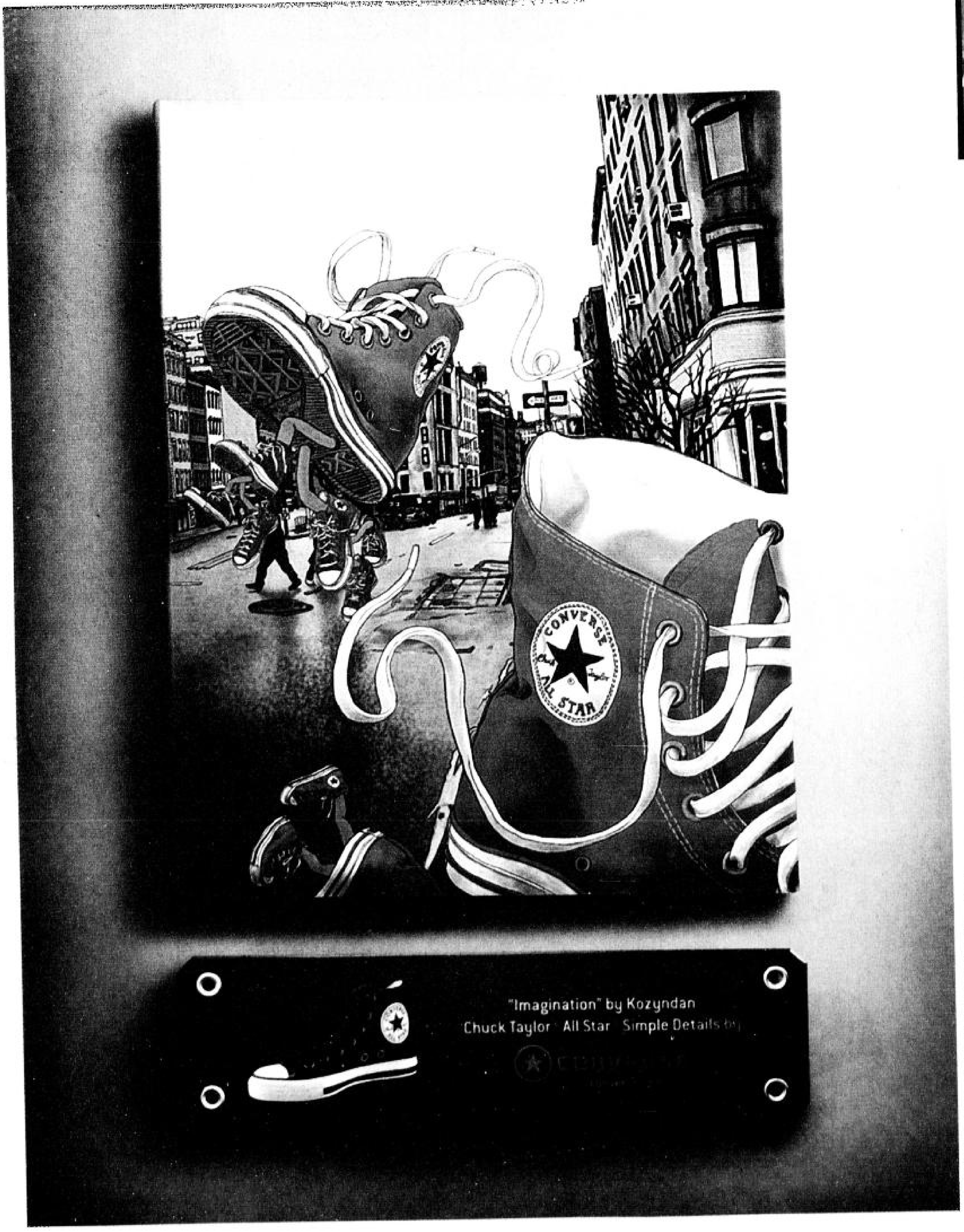
Hoping to offer an edgy product, several players are partnering with emerging artists to add some pizzazz to their collections. For many, it's a more avant-garde way to connect with trend-conscious consumers than with mainstream designer deals.

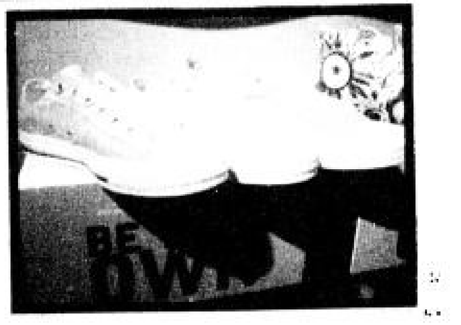
Converse, for example, is launching a series for spring '06 that features its classic Chuck Taylor silhouette with uppers designed by contemporary artists Tiffany Malakooti and Nate Van Dyke, and printed with each artist's rendition.

These are part of Converse's Product Democracy collection, where the classic shoe maker went out and found local artists to design their own Chucks. So basically imagine everything you know about your favorite pair of Chucks: the fit, the silhouette, the awesome colors—and then imagine them printed with incredible colorful graphics.

"Jigaram, you
are my liver."

Designed by Tiffany Malakooti, these were printed from an original colored pencil drawing, and inside reads, "Jigaram, you are my liver." In this case, liver means, "reason for living." It's all here—even the circular logo on the ankle, just where you left it —yet better, somehow.


"Imagination" by Kozyndan
Chuck Taylor All Star Simple Details by



CONVERSE CHUCK TAYLOR SLIP-ON

The classic Chuck Taylor, with a little something different. It was the standard footwear for decades of basketball players as well as the Ramones, and all in all it's pretty much the perfect sneaker. Now you can have the same style with the comfort of a slip-on. This version of the All Star has frayed, a deconstructed canvas upper and... are you sitting down? NO LACES. The tongue is instead sewn up with elastic goring for easy-on, easy-off functionality. White rubber outsoles with signature black striping all the way around and an extra layer up at the toe, plus the patented rubber toe cap. Soles are gum rubber, for grip and comfort. Metal lace grommets and logo patch on tongue finish off this sneaker for the ages, updated for the new age.

Oscar-winning actor Philip Seymour Hoffman

CHUCK TAYLOR PREMIERE COLLECTION

Chuck Taylor is continually evolving. Recently, seen on the likes of Oscar-winning Philip Seymour Hoffman ("Capote") and talk show host Ellen de Generes is the recent incarnation of Converse's most popular product. The silhoutte is slimmer and less bulkier, thus creating an impression of sexiness. The Chuck Taylor Premiere collection is the must-haves this season.

Converse's Tessie Lee, Purefoods Chunkee Giants' James Yap, Ping Dela Fuente, Owen Lee,Sandara Park, Managing Director Margie Go, John Pratts inagurating Converse Shangri-la

Converse Shangri-la Plaza, 5th Level.

Converse Shoppesville, Greenhills

CONVERSE opens two new stores

Purefoods Chunkee Giants' James Yap and John Pratts checking Chuck Taylor sneakers

Sandara Park gets her top Converse pick

Pink and Kris Magazine's ed-in-chief Jane Kingsu, Creative Synergy's Cyril Manadlang, Converse PR Jake Ramirez

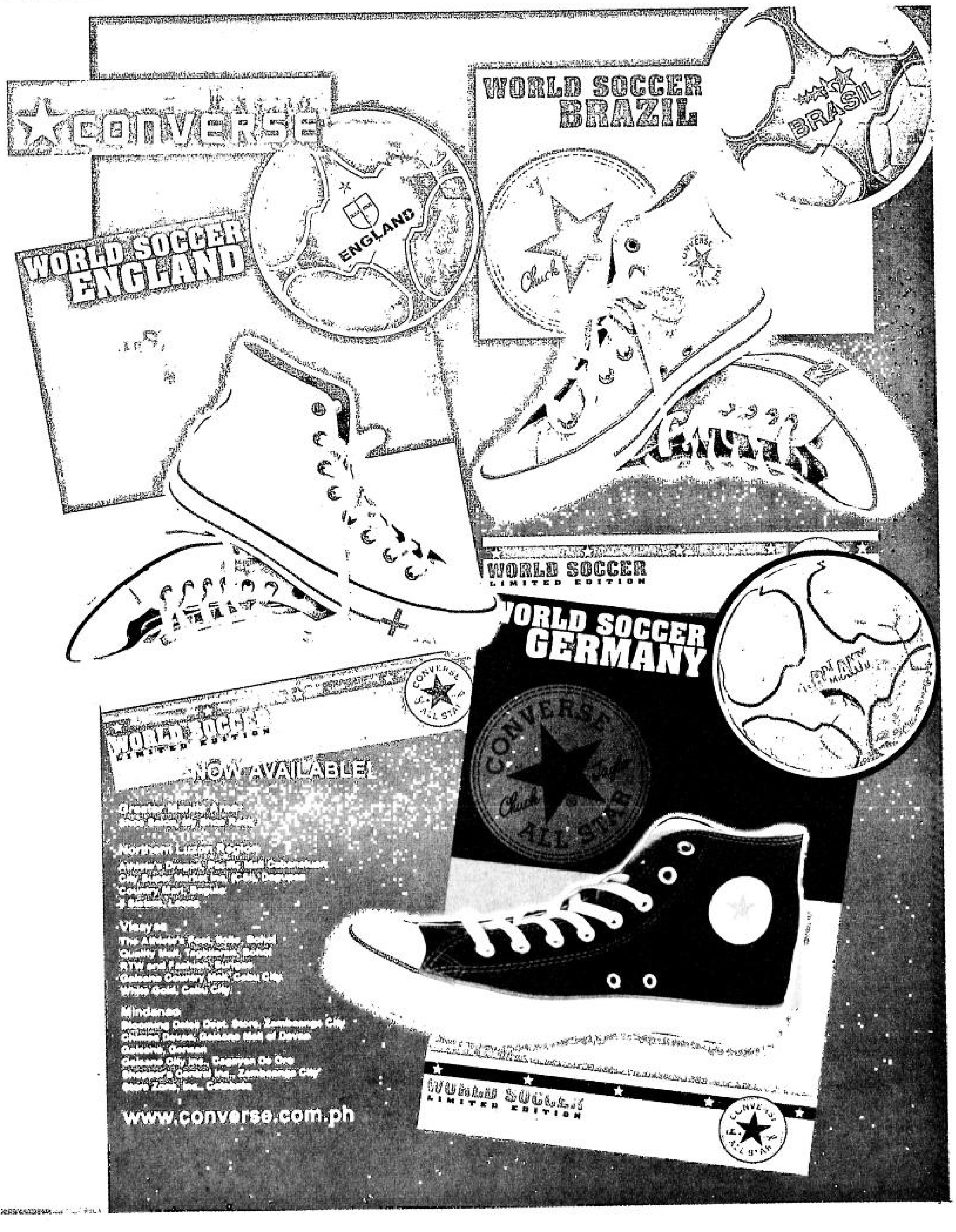
Converse, the iconic American shoe brand founded in 1908 by Marquis Converse, unveils two new stores in the Philippines. The simultaneous openings of Converse Shoppesville and Converse Shangri-La Plaza Mall is a testimony that the market's demand for Chuck Taylor All Star is still unquenched. The shoe line created in 1917 and named after Converse's first brand ambassador, Charles "Chuck" Taylor, has so far sold almost a billion pairs ever since its inception. Recently, Miami's hot guard, Dwyane Wade, together with Chicago Bull's Kirk Hinrich and Raptor's Chris Bosh, joined Converse as its new endorsers, joining an illustrious roster of basketball greats that have worn Converse such as Bob Cousy, Wilt Chamberlain, Magic Johnson, Larry Bird, Karl Malone, and recent Philippine visitor, Dennis Rodman, among others.

Converse in Shoppesville is located at the heart of Greenhills Shopping Center, a shopping haven whose popularity for both local and foreign shoppers dates back since the '80s. Recently, the shopping complex has undergone a major makeover to keep up with the changing times. New stores have opened up around the vicinity and expansion plans are underway. Converse completes the stellar brands that have set up shops in recent months and Converse Shoppesville sells nothing but the original Chuck Taylor All Star and Converse Dwyane Wade basketball shoes.

Converse Shangri-La Plaza, located at the fashionable fifth level of the upscale and tony mall, is living proof that discerning shoppers demand only the best and could tell the genuine fashion finds from phony ones. Shangri-La Plaza is at par with the best shopping destinations in Asia and Converse's presence in the mall will serve the needs of sneaker enthusiasts. The latest 2006 spring/summer as well as fall/autumn collection is already available in the store. Present during the opening were PBA player James Yap, box-office star Sandara Park and "PBB Celebrity Edition" housemate John Pratts, together with Converse managing director Margie Go, Dan Mindanao, Kim Sia, Baby Galang, Tess Chan, Ping Dela Fuente, Owen and Tessie Lee. The event was organized by Converse PR Jake Ramirez.

For more information and updates about Converse, log on to www.converse.com.ph or you may visit Converse stores in Glorietta 2, Shangri-la Plaza, Shoppesville Greenhills, Ali Mall, Festival Mall, Tutuban Mall, Ever Gotesco Commonwealth.

Converse's Dan Mindanao, Margie Go, Baby Galang, Ping dela Fuente, Owen Lee.



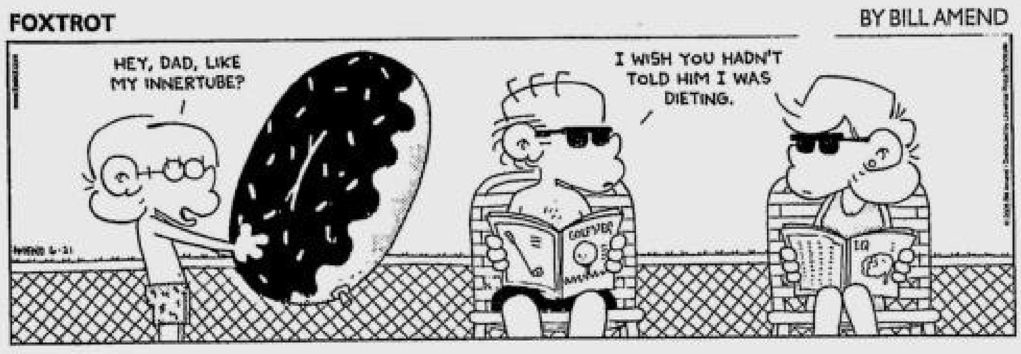
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ComicRelief

e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph

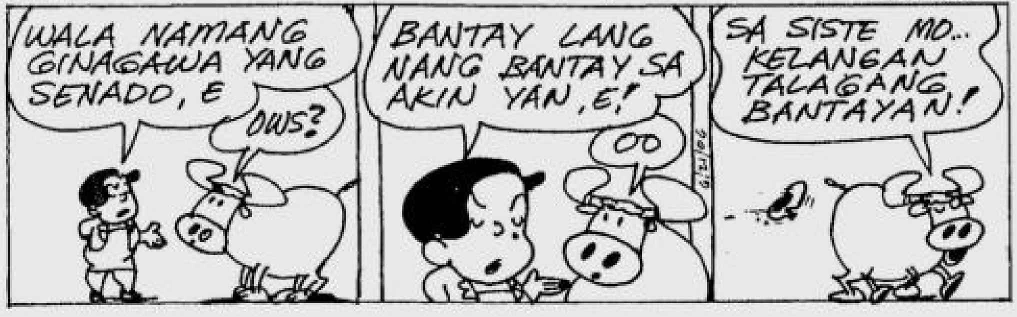
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


HEY, DAD, LIKE MY INNERTUBE?
I WISH YOU HADN'T TOLD HIM I WAS DIETING.
GOLFVER

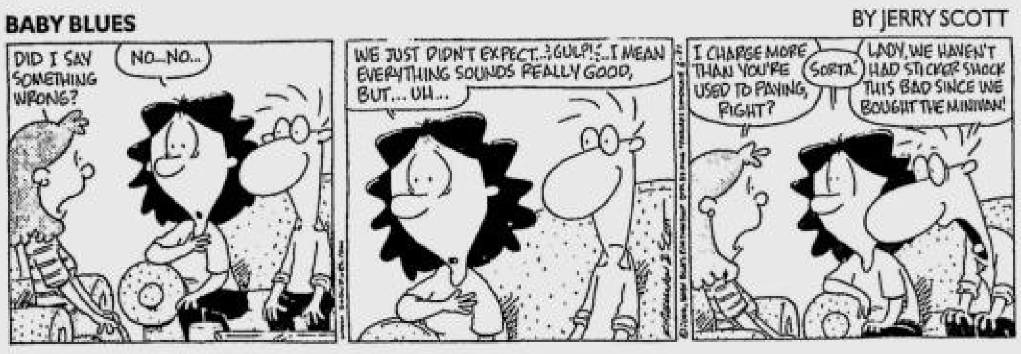
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


WALA NAMANG GINAGAWA YANG SENADO, E
OWS?
BANTAY LANG NANG BANTAY SA AKIN YAN, E!
OO
SA SISTE MO... KELANGAN TALAGANG BANTAYAN!

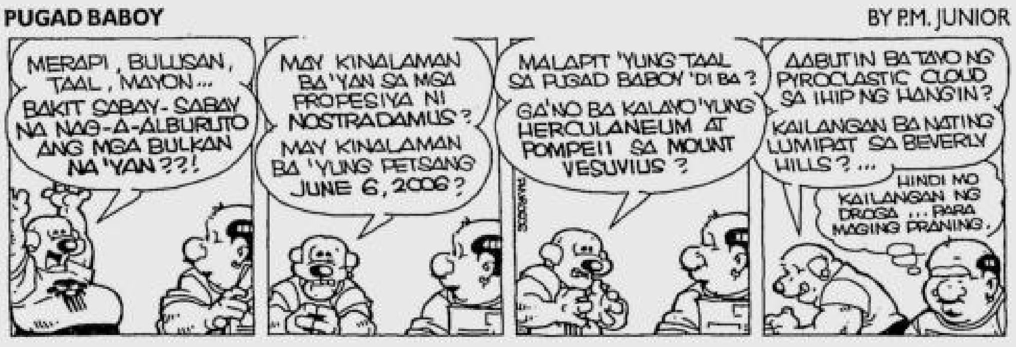
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


DID I SAY SOMETHING WRONG?
NO...NO...
WE JUST DIDN'T EXPECT...GULP!...I MEAN EVERYTHING SOUNDS REALLY GOOD, BUT... UH...
I CHARGE MORE THAN YOU'RE USED TO PAYING, RIGHT?
SORTA.
LADY, WE HAVEN'T HAD STICKER SHOCK THIS BAD SINCE WE BOUGHT THE MINIVAN!

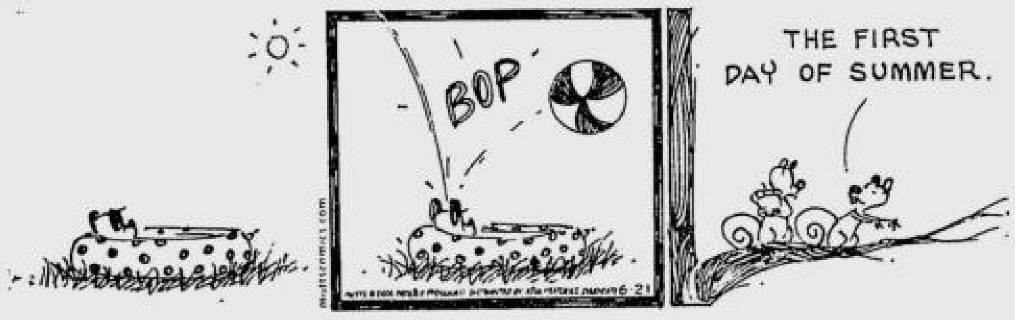
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


MERAPI, BULUSAN, TAAL, MAYON... BAKIT SABAY-SABAY NA NAG-A-ALBURUTO ANG MGA BULKAN NA 'YAN??!
MAY KINALAMAN BA 'YAN SA MGA PROPESIYA NI NOSTRADAMUS?
MAY KINALAMAN BA 'YUNG PETSANG JUNE 6, 2006?
MALAPIT 'YUNG TAAL SA PUGAD BABOY 'DI BA?
GA'NO BA KALAYO 'YUNG HERCULANEUM AT POMPEII SA MOUNT VESUVIUS?
AABUT IN BA TAYO NG PYROCLASTIC CLOUD SA IHIP NG HANG'IN?
KAILANGAN BA NATING LUMIPAT SA BEVERLY HILLS?...
HINDI MO KAILANGAN NG DROGA... PARA MAGING PRANING.

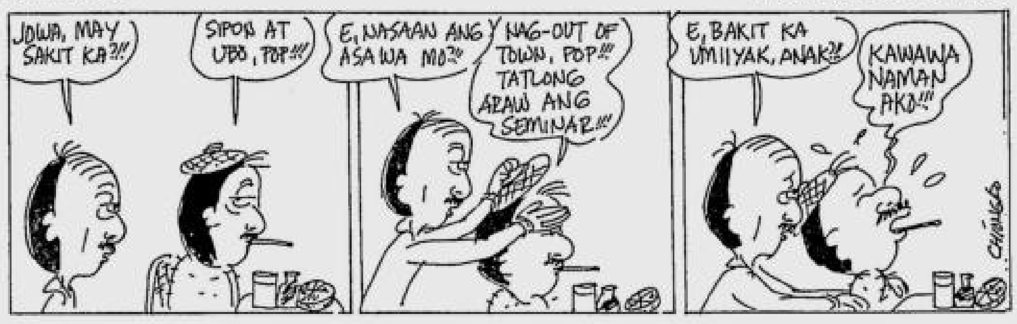
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


BOP
THE FIRST DAY OF SUMMER.
6·21

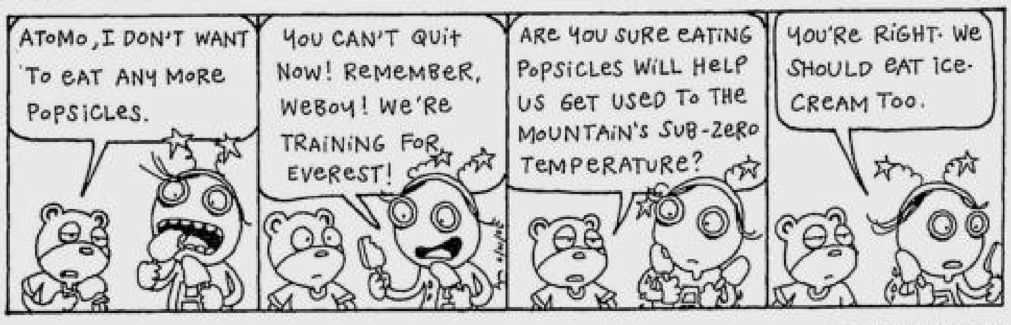
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JOWA, MAY SAKIT KA?!!
SIPON AT UBO, POP!!!
E, NASAAN ANG ASAWA MO?!!
NAG-OUT OF TOWN, POP!!! TATLONG ARAW ANG SEMINAR!!!
E, BAKIT KA UMIIYAK, ANAK?!!
KAWAWA NAMAN AKO!!!
CHIONGLO

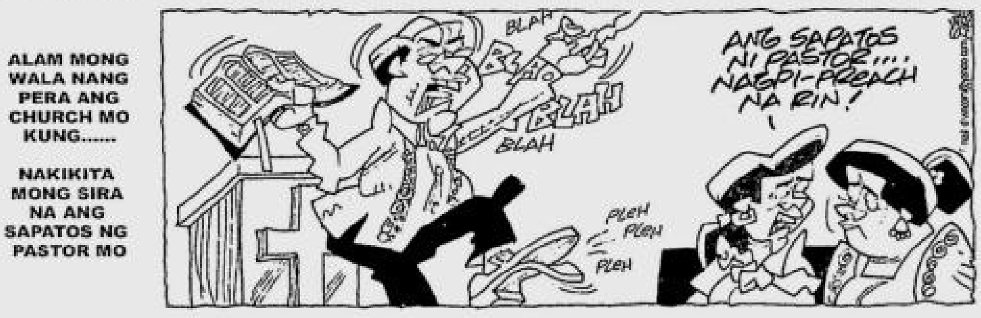
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


ATOMO, I DON'T WANT TO EAT ANY MORE POPSICLES.
YOU CAN'T QUIT NOW! REMEMBER, WEBOY! WE'RE TRAINING FOR EVEREST!
ARE YOU SURE EATING POPSICLES WILL HELP US GET USED TO THE MOUNTAIN'S SUB-ZERO TEMPERATURE?
YOU'RE RIGHT. WE SHOULD EAT ICE-CREAM TOO.

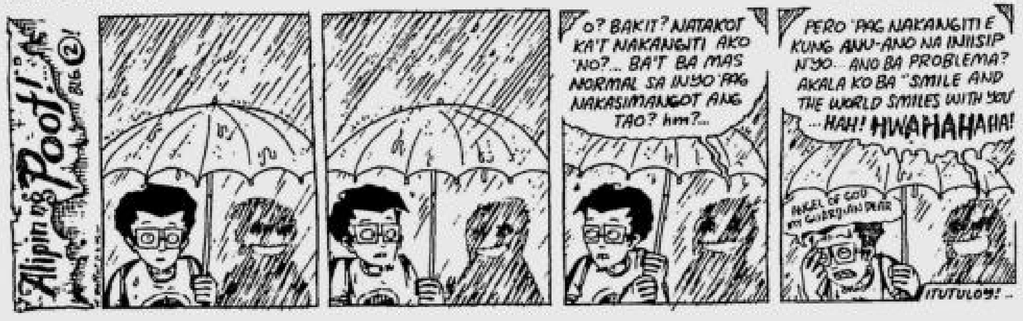
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


ALAM MONG WALA NANG PERA ANG CHURCH MO KUNG......
NAKIKITA MONG SIRA NA ANG SAPATOS NG PASTOR MO
BLAH
BLAH
BLAH
BLAH
ANG SAPATOS NI PASTOR.... NAGPI-PREACH NA RIN!
PLEH
PLEH
PLEH

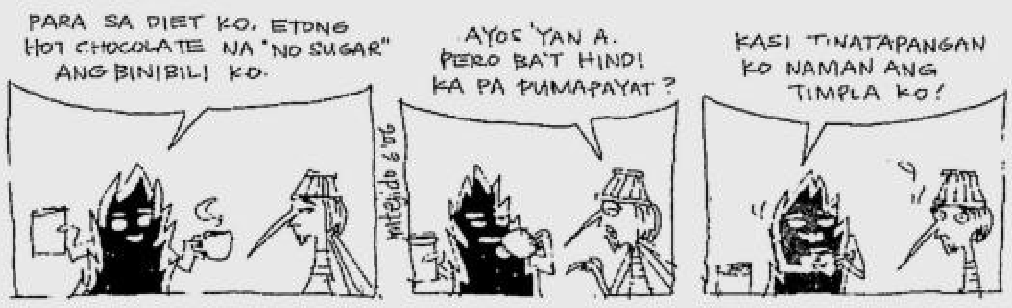
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


Alipin ng Poof!
O? BAKIT? NATAKOT KA'T NAKANGITI AKO 'NO?... BA'T BA MAS NORMAL SA INYO 'PAG NAKASIMANGOT ANG TAO? hm?...
PERO 'PAG NAKANGITI E KUNG ANU-ANO NA INIISIP N'YO... ANO BA PROBLEMA? AKALA KO BA "SMILE AND THE WORLD SMILES WITH YOU" ...HAH! HWAHAHAHA!
ANGEL OF GOD MY GUARDIAN DEAR
ITUTULOY!...

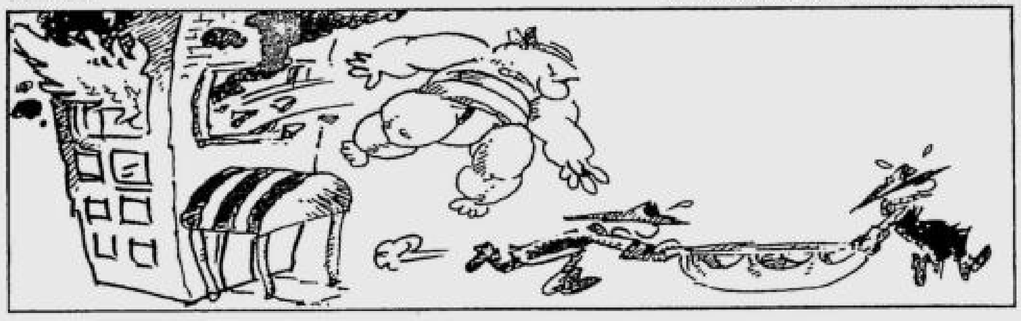
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


PARA SA DIET KO, ETONG HOT CHOCOLATE NA "NO SUGAR" ANG BINIBILI KO.
AYOS 'YAN A. PERO BA'T HINDI KA PA PUMAPAYAT?
KASI TINATAPANGAN KO NAMAN ANG TIMPLA KO!
tejido 6 06

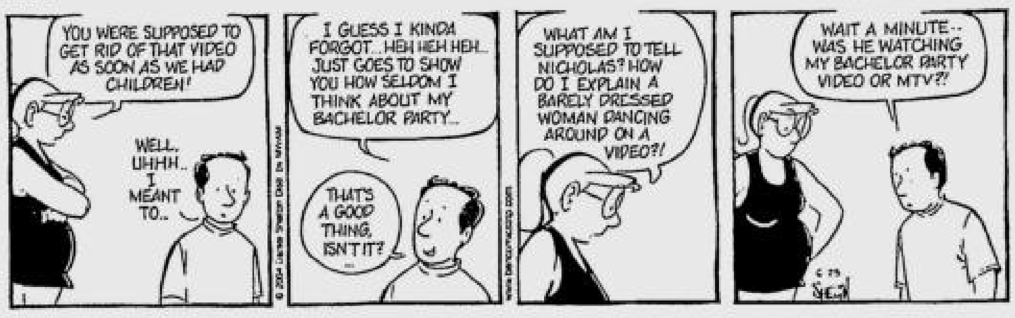
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO GET RID OF THAT VIDEO AS SOON AS WE HAD CHILDREN!
WELL. UHHH.. I MEANT TO..
I GUESS I KINDA FORGOT...HEH HEH HEH... JUST GOES TO SHOW YOU HOW SELDOM I THINK ABOUT MY BACHELOR PARTY...
THAT'S A GOOD THING, ISN'T IT?
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO TELL NICHOLAS? HOW DO I EXPLAIN A BARELY DRESSED WOMAN DANCING AROUND ON A VIDEO?!
WAIT A MINUTE-- WAS HE WATCHING MY BACHELOR PARTY VIDEO OR MTV?!

DAILY CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	■	5	6	7	8	9	■	10	11	12	13
14				■	15					■	16			
17				■	18					■	19			
20				21						22				
■	■	■	23			■	■	■	24			■	■	■
25	26	27			■	28	29	30	■	31		32	33	34
35			■	36	37				38					
39			40	■	41					■	42			
43				44						45	■	46		
47					■	48			■	49	50			
■	■	■	51		52	■	■	■	53			■	■	■
54	55	56				57	58	59				60	61	62
63				■	64					■	65			
66				■	67					■	68			
69				■	70					■	71			

By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

6/21/06

ACROSS
1 Leave out
5 Michael of "A Fish Called Wanda"
10 Finest
14 "Fiesque" composer
15 First name of a plane?
16 Cedar Breaks state
17 Ripening agent
18 Flight segment
19 "Othello" conspirator
20 Talk-show neophyte
23 Tic-tac-toe outcome
24 J. Hancocked?
25 "Cabaret" director
28 Part of TGIF
31 Actor Milo
35 Check fig.
36 Criticize with hindsight
39 Complain
41 Lunch locale
42 Overtake
43 Intensive interrogation
46 Churchillian gesture
47 Flavor
48 Squealer
49 QB Dilfer
51 Practical joke
53 "The Raven" poet
54 Time
63 Inactive
64 Shoot-'em-up
65 Norway's capital
66 Bogs
67 Cubic meter
68 Mouthpiece insert
69 Historic years
70 Subdues
71 Polanski film

DOWN
1 Norwegian saint
2 Creche figures
3 Robert of "The Sopranos"
4 Human trunks
5 Basil sauce
6 Debate side
7 Fertile soil
8 Nastase of tennis
9 Drug agts.
10 Amasses
11 Latin & others
12 Wise person
13 Thunder god
21 Low digits
22 All aflutter
25 Particulars
26 Nebraska city
27 Landing area
28 More aloof
29 Country east of Fiji
30 Hagar's dog
32 Lift
33 City on the Ruhr
34 Plus feature
37 Byrnes or Hall
38 Dr. of rap
40 Development
44 Mild expletive
45 Schoolboy's collar
50 Vacation destination
52 Wraith
53 Former Israeli P.M.
54 Piccolo's cousin
55 __-Neisse line
56 Forearm bone
57 Info
58 Agenda listing
59 Nothing more than
60 Words of understanding
61 Flamenco shouts
62 Silent assents

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

C	H	E	E	R	■	A	P	E	S	■	G	A	R	S
H	I	T	M	E	■	F	R	O	M	■	O	D	E	A
A	D	A	M	A	N	T	I	N	E	■	Y	A	M	S
■	■	■	A	G	O	R	A	■	A	R	A	M	I	S
T	A	M	■	E	N	A	M	O	R	S	■	S	T	Y
S	T	A	N	N	E	■	■	R	I	A	T	A	■	■
A	S	C	O	T	■	K	W	A	N	■	O	P	U	S
R	E	A	D	■	L	A	I	N	G	■	A	P	S	O
S	A	D	A	■	I	S	N	T	■	I	D	L	E	R
■	■	A	L	E	N	E	■	■	A	S	S	E	R	T
S	A	M	■	S	E	M	I	P	R	O	■	S	S	S
P	R	I	M	P	S	■	N	E	I	L	S	■	■	■
O	O	Z	E	■	M	A	C	A	D	A	M	I	A	S
O	M	E	N	■	E	T	A	L	■	T	O	R	S	O
L	A	R	D	■	N	E	S	S	■	E	G	E	S	T

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6/21/06

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're quick-thinking and always optimistic. Because you like to learn new things and experience different aspects of life, you approach everything with passion and intensity. You have strong opinions and a need to express them. Socially, you're fun-loving, magnetic and full of charm. This year could be one of the best years of your life. Think big!

Birthdate of: Prince William, British royal; Juliette Lewis, actress; Jean-Paul Sartre, philosopher.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Your attention now turns to home, family and real estate matters. You might also want to enjoy your own solitude more than usual because memories of your childhood make you thoughtful and pensive.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): The next six weeks are busy! Short trips, shopping, buying and selling, and increased activity with relatives and siblings keep you on the go!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Many of you are thinking about making a major purchase. You're certainly giving a lot of thought to your cash flow. (Or is it a trickle?) Either way, finances and possessions are on your mind.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Today the Sun moves into your sign, where it will stay for the next four weeks. This gives you boundless energy! It also attracts opportunities and people to you.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): It's your turn to lie low for the next six weeks. You need to regroup and replenish your energy. Work alone or behind the scenes if you can.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): In the month ahead, your popularity rating will increase. Enjoy good times with friends. Group activities are appealing. Talk to people about your hopes and dreams for the future.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): The Sun at high noon in your chart now acts like a beacon transmitting your name to the world. People notice you! Bosses, VIPs and parents think highly of you. (Milk this for all it's worth.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Try to expand your world by doing something different or by traveling somewhere you've never been before. You want to learn. You're keen to broaden your horizons.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Shared property, debt, taxes and the responsibilities you have for others need to be defined and dealt with in the next few weeks. This is something you feel strongly about now.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): With the Sun opposite your sign, you might be more tired than usual in the next five weeks. However, partnerships assume a greater importance.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You're eager to get organized and to accomplish a lot in the next month. Great! Capitalize on this urge. Clean up, rearrange and downsize!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): It's your turn to party, dear Pisces. Enjoy flirtations, romance and love affairs. Take a vacation.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green

		4				2		
			5		1			
7				4				9
	2		8		4		6	
		5				7		
	9		1		3		5	
5				6				1
			2		7			
		3				4		

Difficulty Level ★★★

6/21

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

4	8	6	5	1	7	3	2	9
2	7	5	3	9	8	1	6	4
1	9	3	4	2	6	7	5	8
5	6	1	9	4	2	8	7	3
7	3	4	8	6	1	2	9	5
8	2	9	7	5	3	6	4	1
6	4	8	1	7	9	5	3	2
9	1	7	2	3	5	4	8	6
3	5	2	6	8	4	9	1	7

Difficulty Level ★★